RELIGION AND GLOBAL POLITICS

UMMAH YET PROLETARIAT

Islam, Marxism, and the Making of the Indonesian Republic

LIN HONGXUAN

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Ummah Yet Proletariat

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Abbreviations

BBI	Barisan Buruh Indonesia (Indonesian Labor Front)
FDR	Front Demokrai Rakyat (People's Democratic Front)
GRR	Gerakan Revolusi Rakyat (People's Revolutionary Movement)
ISDV	Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereeniging (Indies Social-Democratic Association)
NEI	Netherlands East Indies
NU	Nahdlatul Ulama (Revival of the Ulama)
PARI	Partai Republik Indonesia (Indonesian Republican Party)
PBI	Partai Buruh Indonesia (Indonesian Labor Party)
PID	Politieke Inlichtingen Dienst (Political Intelligence Office)
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party)
PNI	Partai Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Party)
PP	Persatuan Perjuangan (Struggle Union)
PSI	Partai Sosialis Indonesia (Indonesian Socialist Party)
PSII	Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia (Islamic League Party of Indonesia)
SABUPRI	Sarekat Buruh Perkebunan Republik Indonesia (Indonesian Plantation Workers Union)
SBG	Sarekat Buruh Gula (Sugar Workers Union)
SBII	Sarekat Buruh Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic Workers Union)
SOBSI	Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia (Central All-Indonesian Workers Organization)
SOKRI	Sentral Organisasi Koperasi Ra'jat Indonesia (Indonesian People's Central Cooperatives Organization
SPII	Sjarikat Poetri Islam Indonesia (League of Indonesian Islamic Women)
VSTP	Vereniging van Spoor-en Tramwegpersoneel (Federation of Rail and Tramway Personnel)

PANCASILA

KETUHANAN YANG MAHA ESA

KEMANUSIAAN YANG ADIL DAN BERADAB

PERSATUAN INDONESIA

KERAKYATAN YANG DIPIMPIN OLEH HIKMAT KEBIJAK-SANAAN DALAM PERMUSYAWARATAN / PERWAKILAN

KEADILAN SOSIAL BAGI SELURUH RAKYAT INDONESIA

INDONESIA
VIETNAM
THAILAND
PHILIPPINES
BRUNEI
MALAYSIA
MALAYSIA
PACIFIC OCEAN
INDIAN OCEAN
AUSTRALIA
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
TIMOR-LESTE
ACEH
Langsa
Medan
NORTH SUMATRA
SINGAPORE
RIAU ISLANDS
Sibolga
Fort de Kock (Bukittinggi)
0° Equator
Padang
Padang Panjang
WEST SUMATRA
JAMBI
BANGKA-BELITUNG
Palembang
SOUTH SUMATRA
Bengkulu
BENGKULU
LAMPUNG
Batavia (Jakarta)
CENTRAL JAVA
Pekalongan
Semarang
Surabaya
Rangkasbitung
Bandung
Sukabumi
BANTEN
WEST JAVA
Purwokerto
Yogyakarta
Madiun
Surakarta (Solo)
EAST JAVA
YOGYAKARTA S.R.
Pontianak
WEST KALIMANTAN
CENTRAL KALIMANTAN
SOUTH KALIMANTAN
EAST KALIMANTAN
NORTH KALIMANTAN
GORONTALO
NORTH SULAWESI
NORTH MALUKU
WEST SULAWESI
CENTRAL SULAWESI
SOUTH SULAWESI
SOUTHEAST SULAWESI
Makassar
MALUKU
WEST PAPUA
PAPUA
Boven Digoel (Tanahmerah)
WEST NUSA TENGGARA
EAST NUSA TENGGARA
0 250 500 750 km
0 250 500 mi

Introduction

After the 1965–66 massacres of suspected Indonesian Communists, thousands were imprisoned and later exiled to the penal colony of Buru.[1] Former political prisoner Putu Oka Sukanta's novel *Merajut Harkat* (Knitting Dignity, 1999) contains a moving scene in which a political prisoner takes solace in his Muslim faith during the long years of incarceration:

> Pak Manto, one of the older men in the group, went off to the toilet. He was followed by one of the young criminal prisoners who was covered in tattoos.
>
> "Is that a sarong you've got with you, Pak?"
>
> "No."
>
> "Come on now. Tell me the truth. I saw you folding up a sarong just now. Give it here." The words came out sounding harsh and insistent.
>
> "I need it for praying," Pak Manto said softly.
>
> "Praying? Communists don't need to pray. You're going to hell anyway!"
>
> Pak Manto, who was a veteran of the revolutionary war in Central Java, couldn't speak. He just stood there looking at the tattooed kid, swearing at him on the inside. "What do you know about hell and praying? You're not worth a drop of my piss, you punk."[2]

As this excerpt suggests, affective identification with both Islam and Communism was not an unusual phenomenon in Indonesia, but it also illustrates how paradoxical that combination now seems. This monograph demonstrates confluences of Islam and Marxism in the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) and Indonesia from 1915 to 1965 by studying the ways in which Islam and Marxism coexisted, from quotidian entwinement to explicit

[1] For an overview of the massacres, see Geoffrey B. Robinson, *The Killing Season: A History of the Indonesian Massacres, 1965–66* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 378.

[2] Putu Oka Sukanta, *Merajut Harkat* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar bekerjasama dengan Jendela Budaya, 1999), 320–22. Translation courtesy of Keith Foulcher, excerpted with permission from Putu Oka Sukanta, *Threads of Dignity*, trans. Keith Foulcher (Jakarta: Lontar, 2022).

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theorizations of compatibility. Put another way, it traces a genealogy of Soekarno's NASAKOM (a portmanteau of *nasionalisme-agama-Komunisme*, nationalism, religion, and Communism) ideology by investigating NASAKOM's conditions of possibility—the sociohistorical conditions that made Soekarno's promulgation of NASAKOM plausible in the late 1950s. As will become apparent, there is a long and rich history of conciliation between Islam and Marxism in Indonesia that has not received sufficient scholarly attention. This book takes 1915 as its starting point because that year marked the emergence of the first unambiguously Marxist newspaper in the NEI, *Het Vrije Woord* (The Free Word), the newspaper of the Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereeniging (ISDV, the Indies Social-Democratic Association). While this was a Dutch-language newspaper, it went on to spawn a vernacular counterpart, *Soeara Ra'jat* (Voice of the People), in the nascent nationalist language of Bahasa Indonesia. Many others followed, taking Marxist discourse in new directions. Among those that followed in the path broken by *Het Vrije Woord* were strains of Marxist print culture that engaged with Islam. This book takes 1965 as its end point, the year when a countercoup against Soekarno led to a series of hyperviolent massacres of suspected Communists throughout Indonesia, ushering in a military dictatorship that would demonize all things Marxist for decades to come.

Before the imposition of Suharto's authoritarian regime in 1966, two processes or impulses animated Indonesian politics for much of the twentieth century. The first was the project of adapting or translating the world to Indonesia, in ways that would be relevant and beneficial to Indonesia, while retaining a specifically and authentically Indonesian cast. This is a process that Partha Chatterjee eloquently described in *The Nation and Its Fragments*, and which Jennifer Lindsay and Maya H. T. Liem (as well as their many collaborators) ably illustrated through studying Indonesian popular media in *Heirs to World Culture*.[3] This project of adaptation and translation looked to three main sources of inspiration: the United States and Europe; the ummah, the global community of Muslims, particularly in India, Turkey, and Egypt; and the world of anticolonial solidarity, in colonized and semicolonized societies like the Philippines and China. John T. Sidel has shown how "cosmopolitan connectedness" was nurtured by the transregional economic and cultural linkages forged by capitalism and colonialism, as well as the evolution

[3] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); Jennifer Lindsay and Maya H. T. Liem, eds., *Heirs to World Culture: Being Indonesian, 1950–65* (Leiden: KITLV, 2012).

of existing cosmopolitan networks like the Arabic cosmopolis. These were prerequisites for nationalist mobilization in Southeast Asia, allowing Indonesians to imagine the possibility of translating the world to Indonesia in the first place.[4] Indonesian activists and later republican leaders sought to adapt the most compelling ideas from these societies into an Indonesian context, while keeping them relevant to Indonesians. This included engagement with Marxist critiques of capitalism and imperialism. Hybridity and creative adaptation were evident across the political spectrum, and their ubiquity undermines the familiar but analytically limited labels such as "nationalist," "socialist," "Communist," or "Islamic" that scholars have used as shorthand in mapping Indonesian political thinking.[5]

The second process at play was the attempt by Indonesian Muslims to translate Islam into a political idiom, using Islamic sources to construct an intellectual scaffolding for viable political alternatives to European empires, capitalist liberal democracies, or purported socialist utopias. This was part of a broader wave of modernist Islamic revivalism that had begun in the nineteenth century, sinking deep roots in Egypt and South Asia, which sought to make Islam politically and socially relevant beyond providing a set of ritual prescriptions and traditions. For Indonesian Muslims, the project of formulating Islam politically was intimately connected to a sense of the fundamental rationality and justice of Islam, which James Siegel describes as the *akal*/*nafsu* dichotomy.[6] An Islamic society is one in which *akal*, the God-given rational faculties of humanity, prevail, in accordance with Islamic teachings. A society in which *nafsu*, the base desires of humanity, rules is one that is disordered, exploitative, and unjust. Precisely because they believed Islam to be a rational religion, a source of moral guidance that was compassionate, fair, and all-encompassing, Indonesian Muslims sought and often found resonances between Islam and the intellectual products of the non-Islamic world, such as socialism. Their preconceptions of what Islam had been, or could be again, that is, that Islam was inherently rational and just, colored their attempts to formulate Islam politically. Unsurprisingly, their formulations of Islam often emphasized social justice, respect for women, or the accommodation of non-Muslims, rather than the sanctity of property

[4] John T. Sidel, *Republicanism, Communism, Islam: Cosmopolitan Origins of Revolution in Southeast Asia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2021), 82–83.

[5] For example, see Herbert Feith and Lance Castles, eds. and trans., *Indonesian Political Thinking, 1945–1965* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970).

[6] James T. Siegel, *The Rope of God* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

rights or the inviolability of individual freedoms. This was rarely done in the language or with the tools of formal Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), although most drew heavily on Islamic sources of authority like the Qur'an and hadith to justify their arguments.[7] This process was abetted by the prevailing political winds in an optimistic era of decolonization and under Cold War pressures, but the deeper impulse was Indonesian Muslims' desire to formulate Islam in ways that lived up to its claims to justice.

This book will examine these varied strands of *pergerakan* (lit. movement) print culture in Bahasa Indonesia, as expressed in newspapers, journals, books, reprinted speeches, memoirs, letters, novels, the scripts of plays, and poetry.[8] I define print culture in the broadest possible sense, encompassing the various vehicles of artistic and political knowledge transmission that collectively serve as an index of the ideas circulating in NEI/Indonesian society. The phenomenon that this book explores and explains is the confluence of Islam and Marxism. The questions it poses are (1) how were Islam and Marxism perceived as compatible, or why did they tend to converge? (2) what conditions made possible, or even facilitated, conciliations of Islam and Marxism? (3) how were such conciliations configured or articulated? None of the answers to these questions are monolithic. The answers reflect a wide spectrum of responses, as Indonesians found various ways to reconcile their Islamic identity with the intellectual exports of Europe or the Islamic world, or the historical experiences of other societies. Along the way, it will become clear that comfortable labels like "Islamic," "nationalist," and "Communist," so often used to code individual or organizational political allegiances, are little more than convenient a shorthand that does no justice to the complexities of Indonesians' political inspirations.

Vernacular print culture is an important historical source not because it reflected historical reality—although it sometimes did—but because it was aspirational. It was in print that pergerakan activists were free to imagine the future contours of an Indonesian polity; it was their aspirations, at times

[7] Hadith are reports of the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad and other early Muslims, considered an authoritative source of revelation second only to the Qur'an. They were collected, transmitted, and taught orally for two centuries after Muhammad's death and then began to be collected in written form and codified. See "Hadith," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito. Oxford Islamic Studies Online, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e758 (accessed May 7, 2021).

[8] The pergerakan constituted a wide range of political actors of diverse ideological backgrounds, whose political activism ranged from agitating for independence to fostering the "national awakening" of an Indonesian nation. What united them was their conviction of both the possibility and necessity of shaping a distinctly Indonesian future.

blending Marxism and Islam in accord with the optimistic zeitgeist of the age, that I find intriguing and deeply moving. Their progressive visions for a prosperous and equitable Indonesia did not perceive ideology, ethics, and religion as inimical; rather, they sought to carve an authentically Indonesian path toward the future, even if this entailed selectively reinterpreting the past and ignoring inconvenient facts about the present. This book may be reasonably described as an intellectual history of Indonesian anticolonial activism and republican political thought, but it is also a history of aspirations and dreams. These aspirations, which invoked Islam and Marxism in varying ways, matter because they exerted a gravitational pull on political rhetoric and policymaking long after independence. Dreams may seem ephemeral, but these dreams were integral components of the Indonesian nation-state's self-conception.

State archives and intelligence dossiers may indeed offer a more objective view of the pergerakan as they were, warts and all, but it is what they hoped to be, the possibilities that they explored, that grips the imagination. These visions of an Indonesian future are no less worthy of our attention than complex historical realities. Visions of a future Indonesia colored by both Islam and Marxism were articulated by a wide range of Indonesians and constituted a model of progressive Islamic discourse. Its discursive descendants can be found in the work of Indonesian Muslim intellectuals like Abdurrahman Wahid and Nurcholish Madjid, whose many disciples and admirers remain politically active in Indonesia today.

Chapter Summary

The first chapter focuses on the phenomenon of Islamic Communism, from the beginning of unequivocal Marxist print culture in 1915 to the suppression of the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI, Communist Party of Indonesia) in 1927. Besides exploring the nature of Islamic Communism and its conditions of possibility, it also highlights competing alternatives to Islamic Communism and considers the social context in which conciliations of Islam and Marxism were formulated by examining vernacular newspapers and novels.

The second chapter focuses on pergerakan activities during a repressive era, in which their opportunities for activism were circumscribed, from the implementation of strict censorial measures against the pergerakan in 1927 to

the occupation of the NEI by the Imperial Japanese Army in 1942. It explores the writings of pergerakan activists affiliated with the Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah Islamic schools in West Sumatra, as well as those of self-consciously Muslim pergerakan organizations like the PSII (Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia) and Permi (Persatuan Muslimin Indonesia). This chapter pays special attention to the pedagogical and discursive contributions of female activists such as Rasimah Ismail, Ratna Sari, Rasuna Said, S. Yati, Maria Ulfah Santoso, and Soewarsih Djojopoespito.

The third chapter covers the Indonesian Revolution of 1945–49, picking up the narrative after the Japanese occupation. It focuses on the re-emergent PKI's relationship with Islam, and Islamic republican leaders' engagement with Marxist ideas. It also highlights the emergence of new Marxist republican movements, from the obscurely local PKI Lokal Islamy (Local Islamic Indonesian Communist Party) to the nationally prominent Persatuan Perjuangan (Struggle Union), both of which openly proclaimed the compatibility of Islam and Communism in the interest of preserving the broadest possible revolutionary coalition.

The fourth chapter analyzes Indonesia's parliamentary democracy period (1950–59). It examines Muslim republicans' engagement with Marxist ideas (described by George Kahin as "religious socialists"), including Mohammad Hatta, Mohammed Natsir, and Sjafruddin Prawiranegara.[9] It also explores how Communists theorized Islam as compatible with Marxism in the new republic, and how many Muslim politicians across the political spectrum felt unable to ignore the validity of Marxist critiques of capital. To illustrate the conditions of possibility that made these conciliations of Islam and Marxism possible, this chapter ends with a brief look at Indonesian cultural production of the 1950s to illustrate the social and intellectual milieu that made such creative political thinking possible.

Chapter 5 serves as an epilogue, using transcripts of political speeches and plays to show the calcification of hitherto dynamic conciliations of Islam and Marxism into state ideology. Soekarno's NASAKOM helped justify concentrating executive power in the president's hands, leveraging earlier conciliations of Islam and Marxism to legitimize a semiauthoritarian government that was theoretically beneficent and effective enough to address both Islamic and Marxist concerns. Coming after years of parliamentary

[9] George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1952), 157.

stasis and ineffectual governance, this seemed attractive to many, but it was a poisoned chalice. Although well intentioned, one preeminent, charismatic leader was no better at delivering good governance and social justice to Indonesians than squabbling political parties had been. Mixing Islam and Marxism was tainted by Soekarno's actions, and the deepening Cold War entrenched the rejection of all things Marxist among conservative Muslims.

My analysis of these sources shows how pervasive, and perhaps even paradigmatic, both Islam and Marxism were in Indonesian politics from 1915 to 1965. Although the phenomenon of explicit Islamic Communism was obvious primarily in the 1920s, its significance and appeal reverberated for decades after, taking on different permutations. In analyzing vernacular print culture, I deliberately privilege the discursive over the organizational. Rather than focusing on organizational links such as Comintern instructions to the PKI, or interparty alliances in the Indonesian republic, I am concerned instead with the highly original and progressive arguments made by prominent activists of surprisingly varied backgrounds. These activists felt compelled to engage with the Islamic milieu in which they operated, as well as with Marxist ideas that had taken root in the NEI and Indonesia. Their writings show that they emphasized the importance of social justice in Islam, and interpreted Marxism as an effective vehicle for the achievement of Islamic goals within the framework of anticolonial resistance. After independence, they found both Islam and Marxist concepts relevant to their political aspirations for the new Indonesian republic.

The varied sources examined here suggest that many pergerakan activists perceived Islam as an equitable and just system for organizing social life, as expressed in the obligation to give alms (*zakat*) and the prohibition of usury (*riba*).[10] Communism made similar claims to being an equitable system for organizing human relations, and many pergerakan activists sought to build on this perceived concordance of goals. Rather than the PKI cynically courting Muslim support by disingenuously claiming Communism served Islamic ends, I argue that Indonesians theorized conciliation in a variety of ways, and these conciliations evolved over time. The conditions of the 1910s and 1920s were conducive to the articulation of explicit Islamic Communism both within and without the PKI, but colonial censorship and

[10] Takashi Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1912–1926* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 134; Soekarno, *Marhaen and Proletarian*, trans. Claire Holt (Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1960), 50; Socialist Moeslim Indonesia, "Igama Allah jang Sedjati mesti menghendaki Sosialisme!," *Fadjar Asia*, December 28, 1928.

surveillance foreclosed that possibility in the 1930s. Pergerakan activists became more reflective, and their activities more pedagogical, but the process of translating the world to the Indies continued, including engagement with Marxist thought. When the revolution began in the 1940s, it facilitated a political efflorescence in which both Muslims and Marxists participated, and the pressing need for republican unity encouraged various alloys of Islam and Marxism.[11] When independence was achieved in 1950, the new republic cast around for inspiration on how best to live up to revolutionary promises of a fairer and more just society, Indonesians proactively attempted to weld diverse ideologies into a governing framework that would best serve Indonesia's needs without abandoning their Indonesian-ness. These conditions once again allowed conciliations of Islam and Marxism to flourish. By the late 1950s, Soekarno's semiauthoritarian guided democracy calcified conciliations of Islam and Marxism into state-sanctioned dogma, without achieving the broad social unity that Soekarno hoped for. In each period, conciliations of Islam and Marxism took on different aspects with different emphases. The Islamic Communism of the 1920s was unapologetic and optimistic, but this would lose some of its appeal by the revolution. Subtler conciliations took center stage, with Communists proclaiming the superiority of Marxism as a vehicle for achieving Islamic goals, and Muslim politicians embracing socialist policies and rhetoric as an alternative to Communism. This book tracks those changes, carefully situating each period in its historical context to showcase both continuity and difference in the evolution of this discursive field.

Contributions to Existing Scholarship

Scholarship on the relationship between Islam and Marxism outside of Indonesia exists, but has tended to take a state-centric, instrumentalist approach, focusing on how ruling parties or states have sought to co-opt or subdue Islamic identities, institutions, and organizations. One exception is Maxime Rodinson's collection of essays on Marxism in the Muslim

[11] After the Japanese surrender on September 2, 1945, the vast majority of the pergerakan activists examined here went on to play significant roles in republican politics, especially during the Indonesian revolution. From that point on, I cease to refer to them as pergerakan activists, and call them republicans instead. However, they were still very much the same people, and the legacy of the preindependence discursive milieu stayed with them even as their political visions evolved.

world, an early attempt to explain the Muslim attraction to Marxist ideas in the decolonizing world, albeit from within an unapologetically European Marxist framework.[12] More recent examples include Eren Tasar's study of how Communist regimes in central Asia tamed Islam, and Ben Fowkes and Bülent Gökay's anthology on Islam and Communism in contexts as disparate as Britain and Albania.[13] In the Chinese context, Jonathan Lipman and Roberta Tontini have authored sensitive studies of how Muslims under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party developed various ways of negotiating their new political realities, if not necessarily reconciling their Islamic identities with Marxism.[14] In the Middle East, Joel Beinin and Zachary Lockman have studied how the Egyptian working class made sense of the new allegiances that the Egyptian nation and Communist ideology imposed upon them, as well as how they negotiated those demands in relation to their Islamic identities.[15] All of these studies have been important in framing the questions posed in this book; I made a conscious decision to focus on how individual Muslims synthesized Marxist ideas (as exemplified by Tontini and by Beinin and Lockman), or how Marxists made sense of their own Islamic identities, rather than to see through the lenses of state policy and organizational links.

The scholarly literature on Indonesian Marxism tends to focus on the PKI at the expense of the many other Indonesian Marxist movements. This institution-centric perspective dominated earlier scholarship on Indonesian Communism and continues to be influential today, informing recent studies like Julia Lowell's *Maoism: A Global History*.[16] The works of Justus van der Kroef, Ruth McVey, Donald Hindley, and Rex Mortimer are generally concerned with the PKI and its formal organs, its affiliate organizations, and its political maneuvering in and outside parliament.[17] This approach has

[12] Maxime Rodinson, *Marxism and the Muslim World* (London: Zed Books, 1979).

[13] Eren Tasar, *Soviet and Muslim: The Institutionalization of Islam in Central Asia, 1943–1991* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Ben Fowkes and Bülent Gökay, eds., *Muslims and Communists in Post-transition States* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

[14] Jonathan Lipman, *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997); Roberta Tontini, *Muslim Sanzijing: Shifts and Continuities in the Definition of Islam in China* (Boston: Brill, 2016).

[15] Joel Beinin and Zachary Lockman, *Workers on the Nile: Nationalism, Communism, Islam, and the Egyptian Working Class, 1882–1954* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

[16] Julia Lovell, *Maoism: A Global History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019).

[17] Justus van der Kroef, *The Communist Party of Indonesia: Its History, Program, and Tactics* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Publications Centre, 1965); Justus van der Kroef, *Communism in South-East Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Ruth T. McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965); Ruth T. McVey, "Teaching Modernity: The PKI as an Educational Institution," *Indonesia* 50 (1990): 5–27; Donald Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia: 1951–1963* (Berkeley: University of California Press,

many merits, but it obscures the sheer intellectual diversity of Indonesian Marxism. It allows the PKI to overshadow the plurality of Marxist discourses that pervaded pre-1965 Indonesian politics, discourses that were embedded in organizations like minor Marxist parties, debating clubs, labor unions, and women's rights organizations. By analyzing Indonesian print culture across the political spectrum instead of focusing on PKI literature, it becomes apparent that Marxist ideas were pervasive.

The scholarship that does look beyond the PKI has been focused on the organizational and diplomatic links between Communist parties, and between Indonesia and Communist states. In relation to the USSR, Ruth McVey and Larissa Efimova's work has been the most prominent, drawing on a rare combination of fluency in both Indonesian and Russian as well as making use of the fleeting accessibility of archives after the fall of the USSR.[18] In relation to the People's Republic of China, Liu Hong and Zhou Taomo have both published detailed and carefully crafted monographs; this is especially true of Zhou's book, which draws on hitherto unexplored PRC archival sources.[19] Hara Fujio and Ramon Guillermo have also explored the relationship between the PKI and regional Communist movements in Southeast Asia, such as Peninsular Malaysia, Borneo, and the Philippines.[20] All of these studies evinced a strong tendency to take the PKI, its activities, members, and literature as their primary subjects. As valuable as studying party-on-party interactions or state-on-state diplomacy is, this frame of analysis prioritizes organizational ties and political maneuvers at the expense of the discursive. To get a sense of the intellectual milieu of not just the PKI leadership but of Indonesian Marxists in general, or the actual ideas circulating among Indonesians influenced by Marxism, it is necessary to focus on the reading material—but also speeches and plays—that Indonesians consumed.

1964); Rex Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism under Sukarno: Ideology and Politics, 1959–1965* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974).

[18] Larisa M. Efimova, "Stalin and the Revival of the Communist Party of Indonesia," *Cold War History* 5, no. 1 (2005): 107–20; Larisa M. Efimova and Ruth T. McVey, "Stalin and the New Program for the Communist Party of Indonesia," *Indonesia* 91 (2011): 131–63.

[19] Taomo Zhou, *Migration in the Time of Revolution: China, Indonesia, and the Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019); Taomo Zhou, "Ambivalent Alliance: Chinese Policy towards Indonesia, 1960–1965," *China Quarterly* 221 (2015): 208–28; Hong Liu, *China and the Shaping of Indonesia, 1949–1965* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, in association with Kyoto University Press, 2011).

[20] Ramon Guillermo, "Blood-Brothers: The Communist Party of the Philippines and the Partai Komunis Indonesia," *Southeast Asian Studies* 7 (2018): 13–38; Hara Fujio, "The Malayan Communist Party and the Indonesian Communist Party: Features of Co-operation," *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 6 (2010): 216–49.

The partial exception to this tendency is the rigorous research on Tan Malaka, once a PKI leader himself, undertaken by scholars such as Harry Poeze and Helen Jarvis. Poeze has published a veritable mountain of work in English, Dutch, and Indonesian on Tan Malaka's complex intellectual legacy.[21] This includes his multivolume study of Tan Malaka's activities during the revolution, detailing how this anti-PKI, anti-Stalinist Communist leader re-emerged as a potent political force during the Indonesian Revolution even after two decades in exile.[22] Helen Jarvis translated Tan Malaka's lengthy autobiography (written in a jail cell amid general wartime scarcity) and provided important analysis of Tan Malaka's unusual role in Indonesian politics.[23] Their in-depth research on this intellectually versatile Indonesian Marxist has exposed modalities of being Indonesian, being Muslim, and being Communist that force readers to reexamine the presumed antipathy between Islam and Marxism. It has also inspired a new generation of scholars like Oliver Crawford to study the "translation" of Marxism to the Indies by tracing the etymologies and ideological genealogies of the terms Tan Malaka employed.[24] This book builds on Poeze's and Jarvis's work, going beyond the thorough examination of one (admittedly prominent) man's political philosophy, and situating Tan Malaka within a broader discursive context that was remarkably open to confluences of Islam and Marxism.

In biographies of prominent Indonesian politicians, traces of confluence between Islam and Marxism sometimes emerge. Notable examples include Rudolf Mrázek's biography of Sutan Sjahrir, James Rush's and Khairudin Aljunied's biographies of Hamka, Mavis Rose's and Deliar Noer's biographies of Hatta, and J. D. Legge's and Bob Hering's biographies of Soekarno.[25]

[21] Harry A. Poeze, *Tan Malaka: Stirjder Voor Indonesie's Vrijheid: Levensloop van 1897 tot 1945* (The Hague: Martinius Nijhoff, 1976); Harry A. Poeze, *Tan Malaka: Pergulatan Menuju Republik*, trans. Alfian (Jakarta: Grafitipers, 1988); Harry A. Poeze, "The Cold War in Indonesia, 1948," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 40, no. 3 (2009): 497–517.

[22] Harry A. Poeze, *Tan Malaka, Gerakan Kiri, Dan Revolusi Indonesia*, 4 vols. (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2009).

[23] Helen Jarvis, "Tan Malaka: Revolutionary or Renegade?," *Critical Asian Studies* 19 (1987): 41–55; Tan Malaka, *From Jail to Jail*, trans. Helen Jarvis, 3 vols. (Athens: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1991).

[24] Oliver Crawford, "The Political Thought of Tan Malaka" (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2018).

[25] Rudolf Mrázek, *Sjahrir: Politics and Exile in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1994); Deliar Noer, *Mohammad Hatta: Conscience of a Nation, 1902–1980* (Jakarta: Penerbit Djambatan Perwakilan KITLV, 2002); Mavis Rose, *Indonesia Free: A Political Biography of Mohammad Hatta* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1987); J. D. Legge, *Sukarno: A Political Biography* (London: Penguin, 1973); B. B. Hering, *Soekarno: Founding Father of Indonesia, 1901–1945* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002); James R. Rush, *Hamka's Great Story: A Master Writer's Vision for Modern Indonesia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press,

Admitted into the national pantheon of anticolonial dissidents and revolutionary heroes, these individuals attract scholarly attention, but the political constituencies they represented or were incubated in have not been carefully examined. For example, Sjahrir's Partai Sosialis Indonesia (Socialist Party of Indonesia, PSI) has never been the subject of a scholarly monograph, nor has Hatta and Sjahrir's Marx-influenced anticolonial organization, the Pendidikan National Indonesia (Indonesian National Education, hereafter the Pendidikan). The breadth and nuance of their political visions were attenuated to avoid incriminating associations with Marxism, which became deeply transgressive in Indonesia after 1965. Nevertheless, such biographies, by virtue of their depth, hint at the ways in which Islamic identity and Marxist frames of reference could comfortably coexist in the worldviews of Indonesian intellectuals. By examining biographies and memoirs, I recover glimpses of their inventive political philosophies, originally published in long-ignored newspapers, pamphlets, and reprinted speeches. These glimpses suggest that Islamic and Marxist perspectives were deeply entwined even at the highest levels of pergerakan and republican leadership.

Indonesian writers, both academics and former Marxists, have only recently begun to explore Indonesia's historical relationship with Marxism in general, and the relationship between Indonesian Islam and Marxism in particular. This is largely because Marxism is still a deeply sensitive topic, linked as it is to the PKI and the abortive coup purportedly masterminded by the PKI on September 30, 1965 (a.k.a. G30S), which led to military-directed reprisals in the form of massacres of civilians in 1965 and 1966. The transgressive nature of anything Marxist-related has been seared into citizens' consciousness by the annual broadcast of Arifin C. Noer's propaganda film, *The Treachery of G30S/PKI*, every September 30 from 1984 to 1998.[26] Despite the fall of Suharto's censorial dictatorship in 1998, Indonesian scholars of Marxism have had to be circumspect, especially since any insinuation that Islam might be "tainted" by Marxism can raise hackles in military and conservative Muslim circles, both of which are politically dominant today.

Indonesian historians Hilmar Farid and Razif have published important work that explores the importance of unregulated, clandestine print culture

2016); Khairudin Aljunied, *Hamka and Islam: Cosmopolitan Reform in the Malay World* (Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Cornell University Press, 2018).

[26] Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 378.

in building Indies—and specifically Communist—political consciousness.[27] Hersri Setiawan, a former political prisoner accused of being a PKI sympathizer, has published a study of the Madiun affair (1948) that challenges the widely accepted narrative that Madiun constituted a PKI attempt to subvert the Indonesian republic.[28] Syamsul Bakri's study of Haji Misbach's explicitly Islamic Communist movement in Surakarta during the 1920s is one of the very few monographs by an Indonesian academic that actively addresses the relationship between Islam and Communism, although the phenomenon is hardly unfamiliar to Indonesian scholars.[29] In their work, it is clear that many Communists saw themselves as Muslims, although with the exception of Bakri no sustained effort is made to explain that confluence. I attempt to follow up on the hints of confluence dropped in Indonesian scholarship, incorporating them into a thorough analysis of how Islam and Marxism have coexisted and coevolved over decades.

Research on less explicitly political subjects has generated significant insight on the relationship between Islam and Marxism in Indonesian political life. This is true of Michael Bodden's essay on leftist theater during the Cold War, as well as the many essays contributed by various scholars to Jennifer Lindsay and Maya Liem's anthology of essays on the pre-1965 attempts to "translate" the world to Indonesia.[30] Keith Foulcher and William Bradley Horton have focused on novels as historical sources, examining them for valuable insights into the zeitgeist of various periods in Indonesian history.[31] In doing so, they have built on the work of earlier scholars like Claire Holt, whose seminal monographs *Culture and Politics in Indonesia* (1972) and *Art in Indonesia: Continuity and Change* (1967) first took Indonesian artistic production as their subject of interest.[32] These scholars' works reveal multiple

[27] Hilmar Farid and Razif, "Batjaan Liar in the Dutch East Indies: A Colonial Antipode," *Postcolonial Studies* 11, no. 3 (2008): 277–92.

[28] Hersri Setiawan, *Negara Madiun? Kesaksian Soemarsono Pelaku Perjuangan* (Jakarta: Forum Studi Perubahan dan Peradaban, 2002).

[29] Syamsul Bakri, *Gerakan Komunisme Islam Surakarta 1914–1942* (Yogyakarta: LKiS Pelangi Askara, 2015).

[30] Michael Bodden, "Modern Drama, Politics, and the Postcolonial Aesthetics of Left-Nationalism in North Sumatra: The Forgotten Theater of Indonesia's LEKRA, 1955–65," in *Cultures at War: The Cold War and Cultural Expression in Southeast Asia*, ed. Tony Day and Maya H. T. Liem (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Southeast Asian Program Publications, 2010), 45–80; Lindsay and Liem, *Heirs to World Culture*.

[31] Keith Foulcher, "Moving Pictures: Western Marxism and Vernacular Literature in Colonial Indonesia," in *Chewing Over the West: Occidental Narratives in Non-Western Readings* (New York: Rodopi, 2009); William Bradley Horton, "History Unhinged: World War II and the Reshaping of Indonesian History" (PhD diss., Waseda University, 2016).

[32] Claire Holt, *Culture and Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972); Claire Holt, *Art in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967).

shades of cooperation and compromise between Muslims and Marxists, of leftist art accommodating Islam, or of Muslim artists engaging with Marxist ideas in their pursuit of articulating an authentically Indonesian artistic voice. Taking inspiration from their work, this book explores how both Islam and Marxism informed Indonesian cultural production. What politicians found difficult to utter, or express delicately, was sometimes more easily voiced by artists.

Geographically focused studies of Indonesia have highlighted the—often regionally specific—dynamics underpinning conciliations of Islam and Marxism. Examples include Audrey Kahin's and Jeffrey Hadler's monographs on West Sumatra, which uncover connections between individual Muslims and Marxists by examining a particular area in detail over the course of decades.[33] Takashi Shiraishi's study of Haji Misbach's Islamic Communist movement in and around Surakarta is wonderfully detailed because it situates its object of study within a specifically central Javanese context, from the courtly culture of the royal palaces (*kraton*) to the lived realities of wage laborers on sugarcane plantations.[34] Another realm of study that has produced important insights into how Islam could incubate Marxism has been the study of the Indonesian labor movement. The work of John Ingleson, Jafar Suryomenggolo, and Ben White has shown how union activism in the pursuit of concrete gains could bring Muslims and Marxists together, and how labor activists prioritized respecting the identities and beliefs of the people they sought to organize.[35] This book goes beyond the narrow temporal and geographic foci of those studies, attempting to show how conciliations of Islam and Marxism operated as an evolving discursive field across five decades.

Unlike Indonesian Marxism, which remains a taboo and esoteric subject, there has been no shortage of excellent scholarship on Indonesian Islam. Nearly all of it, however, tends to mention Islam's relationship with Marxism

[33] Audrey R. Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration: West Sumatra and the Indonesian Polity* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999); Jeffrey Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

[34] Takashi Shiraishi, "Islam and Communism: An Illumination of the People's Movement in Java, 1912–1926" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1986).

[35] John Ingleson, *Road to Exile: The Indonesian Nationalist Movement, 1927–1934* (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books (Asia), 1979); John Ingleson, *Workers, Unions and Politics: Indonesia in the 1920s and 1930s* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Jafar Suryomenggolo, *Organising under the Revolution: Unions and the State in Java, 1945–48* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, in association with Kyoto University Press, 2013); Ben White, "Remembering the Indonesian Peasant's Front and Plantation Worker's Union (1945–1966)," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 43, no. 1 (2016): 1–16.

only in passing, perhaps because highlighting it generates thorny questions. For example, Khairudin Aljunied's study of Hamka's life and work almost entirely avoids Hamka's engagement with Marxist ideas.[36] Partial exceptions to this tendency to efface Marxism are Rémy Madinier's and Kevin Fogg's studies of Masjumi, which never obscure the ways in which Masjumi politicians were influenced by socialist ideas, though neither study takes up Masjumi's relationship with Marxism as a core theme.[37]

Scholarship on Indonesian print culture, where print culture is treated as a specific conceptual category, is incipient but expanding. Ahmat Adam's study of the impact of an Indonesian vernacular press on the national political consciousness and Benedict Anderson's studies of print capitalism in Indonesia are invaluable for understanding the impact of print culture not only in Indonesia, but across most colonized societies.[38] James Siegel's *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution* adds layers of insight to Adam's and Anderson's arguments in its own unique way, analyzing the subtle impact and revelations of sentiments articulated in Indonesian print culture.[39] J. D. Legge opted for depth over breadth, analyzing specific newspapers for what they revealed about the discursive tenor of a particular period or organization.[40] More recently, their work has been supplemented by ambitious and comprehensive studies of Indonesian newspapers, serialized novels, and pulp fiction undertaken by Yamamoto Nobuto, Sudarmoko, Oshikawa Noriaki, William Bradley Horton, and Rianne Subijanto.[41] I build on this wave of scholarship

[36] Aljunied, *Hamka and Islam*.

[37] Rémy Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia: The Masjumi Party between Democracy and Integralism*, trans. Jeremy Desmond (Singapore: NUS Press, 2015); Kevin Fogg, *Indonesia's Islamic Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[38] Ahmat Adam, *The Vernacular Press and the Emergence of Modern Indonesian Consciousness (1855–1913)* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Southeast Asian Program Publications, 1995); Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991); Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990); Benedict Anderson, "Language, Fantasy, Revolution: Java 1900–1950," in *Making Indonesia*, ed. Daniel S. Lev and Ruth T. McVey (Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1996).

[39] James T. Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

[40] J. D. Legge, "Daulat Ra'jat and the Ideas of the Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia," *Indonesia* 32 (1981): 151–68; Hilmar Farid and Razif, "Batjaan Liar in the Dutch East Indies."

[41] Nobuto Yamamoto, "The Dynamics of Contentious Politics in the Indies: Inlandsche Journalisten Bond and Persatoean Djoernalis Indonesia," *Keio Communication Review* 36 (2014): 5–20; Nobuto Yamamoto, "Print Power and Censorship in Colonial Indonesia, 1914–1942" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 2011); Sudarmoko, "Revisiting a Private Publishing House in the Indonesian Colonial Period: Penjiaran Ilmoe," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 38 (2010): 181–216; Noriaki Oshikawa, "Patjar Merah Indonesia and Tan Malaka: A Popular Novel and a Revolutionary Legend," in *Reading Southeast Asia*, ed. Audrey R. Kahin, Roberta Ludgate, and Dolina Millar (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Southeast Asian Program Publications, 1990), 9–39; Rianne Subijanto, "Enlightenment and the Revolutionary Press in Colonial Indonesia," *International Journal of*

by showing how a rigorous analysis of Indonesian print culture can reveal phenomena that are hard to discern in archival sources. In that sense, this book mirrors Herbert Feith and Lance Castles's efforts to highlight the depth of Indonesian political discourse, allowing Indonesian intellectuals to speak for themselves in their own words.[42]

This book makes its most direct contribution to the existing literature by straddling the histories of Indonesian Marxist movements and Indonesian Islam, reexamining well-trodden Indonesian historical sources as well as hitherto unexamined sources from a fresh perspective. Through a careful rereading of the published writings of well-known pergerakan leaders such as Tan Malaka, Mohammad Hatta, and Soekarno, as well as an analysis of understudied activists' writings, confluences of Islam and Marxism become evident. This phenomenon is rarely pursued as the primary object of scholarly analysis. Only very recently have younger scholars such as Jess Melvin addressed it as a specific object of historical inquiry, but such studies remain regionally-specific.[43] Many prominent scholars have referenced it in passing, as if it were a charming oddity. Examples include Taufik Abdullah's *Schools and Politics*, Anthony Reid's *The Blood of the People*, Jefferey Hadler's *Muslims and Matriarchs*, and Ruth McVey's *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*.[44] I avoid approaching the confluence of Islam and Marxism as an isolated formulation by a few heterodox thinkers, or as the "false consciousness" of peasants and religious leaders who gravitated to the PKI without understanding its message. Rather, I show how conciliations of Islam and Marxism were surprisingly common and were promulgated even at the highest levels of pergerakan and republican leadership. The histories of Indonesian Islam and Indonesian Marxism have been treated as conceptually distinct subjects by most scholars of Indonesia for far too long; this book shows how they have been intertwined since the adolescence of the pergerakan.

Communication 11 (2017): 1357–77; Rianne Subijanto, "Media of Resistance: A Communication History of the Communist Movement in the Dutch East Indies, 1920–1926" (PhD diss., University of Colorado, 2016).

[42] Feith and Castles, *Indonesian Political Thinking, 1945–1965*.

[43] Jess Melvin, "The Hammer and Sickle in 'Mecca's Verandah'—The Indonesian Communist Party in Aceh, 1920–65," *Indonesia* 108 (2019): 23–40.

[44] Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatra (1927–1933)* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1971); Anthony Reid, *The Blood of the People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979); Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*; McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*.

Only three authors have devoted sustained attention to the confluence of Islam and Marxism: Michael C. Williams, Takashi Shiraishi, and Syamsul Bakri.[45] Williams's study is rooted specifically in Banten during the 1926–27 uprisings and relies on ethnographic fieldwork rather than print sources, while Shiraishi's and Bakri's studies are geographically limited to Surakarta. Bakri's book focuses specifically on Haji Misbach, and none of the three venture beyond the 1940s. Early attempts were made by Jeanne Mintz and Kees van Dijk to explore the confluence of Islam and Communism in Indonesia at a conceptual level. However, Mintz's book was focused on the 1950s and seriously hobbled by reliance on party documents. Van Dijk's analysis was limited to a cursory chapter exploring the relationship between Sarekat Islam and the PKI during the 1920s.[46] This book fills many conceptual and chronological gaps, and ties together preceding scholarship by examining confluences of Islam and Marxism as a contiguous discursive field.

This book also enhances the study of Indonesian Marxism and Indonesian Islam by paying particular attention to the discursive contributions of women. Jean Taylor, Susan Blackburn, Helen Ting, Elizabeth Martyn, Mary Margaret Steedly, and Saskia Wieringa, among others, have published groundbreaking work on politically active Indonesian women.[47] However, these studies exist outside of the "mainstream" scholarship on the pergerakan, the revolution, and republican politics. Effectively, women's voices have been sequestered into a separate realm of "women's history," since most of the scholarship on Indonesian history makes only cursory attempts to incorporate women's experiences (if at all). Moreover, the historiographies of Indonesian Marxism and Indonesian Islam both emphasize male voices, rarely including women's intellectual contributions. This is even more true of Indonesian nationalist historiography; women make up only 15 out of the 180 national heroes

[45] Michael C. Williams, *Communism, Religion and Revolt in Banten* (Athens: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1990); Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*; Bakri, *Gerakan Komunisme Islam Surakarta 1914–1942*.

[46] Jeanne S. Mintz, *Mohammed, Marx, and Marhaen: The Roots of Indonesian Socialism* (New York: Praeger, 1965); Cornelisvan Dijk, "'Communist Muslims' in the Dutch East Indies," in *State and Islam*, ed. Cornelis van Dijk and A. H. de Groot (Leiden: Research School CNWS, 1995), 77–95.

[47] Jean Gelman Taylor, ed., *Women Creating Indonesia: The First Fifty Years* (Clayton, Victoria: Monash Asia Institute, 1997); Susan Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Elizabeth Martyn, *The Women's Movement in Postcolonial Indonesia: Gender and Nation in a New Democracy* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005); Mary Margaret Steedly, *Rifle Reports: A Story of Indonesian Independence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013); Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan and the Institute of Social Studies, 2002).

canonized by the state, and most scholarship on Indonesia that does not deal explicitly with gender issues greatly underrepresents the roles played by women in the struggle for independence.[48]

This is partially a simple reflection of the fact that despite the great changes afoot during the twentieth century, Indies society remained deeply unequal and women had limited opportunities to express themselves politically. Women's limited educational opportunities—in a largely illiterate society with a chronic undersupply of education for all natives (*inlander*)—further exacerbated this.[49] Studying print culture instead of archival documents reveals a significant corpus of intellectual output by female pergerakan activists (and later, female republican politicians), a corpus that makes writing women's voices into mainstream Indonesian history a task that can no longer be ignored. I have made a conscious decision to incorporate women's voices in the flow of the narrative, treating them as coequal producers of Indonesian political discourse instead of sequestering them into a separate chapter. Women's voices were underrepresented in relation to men both in reality and in Indonesian historiography, but those privileged few who had the means to speak often found discursive platforms like newspapers and novels to do so. Even these privileged few have been understudied, though not completely ignored. Unsurprisingly, a number of them evinced the same tendency as their male counterparts to engage with both Islam and Marxism in their work.

The Significance of Vernacular Print Culture

In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson argues that print capitalism was a key factor in stimulating the consciousness of "nation-ness," an imagined political community.[50] The threads of pergerakan print culture

[48] Fogg, *Indonesia's Islamic Revolution*, 10.

[49] At the high-water mark of the Dutch imperial project in 1930 (after thirty years of "Ethical Policy" investments in native education), census takers estimated that only about 7.4% of the native population (3,746,225 people) could be considered literate in any language, while only 0.30% (187,708 people) were considered literate in Dutch. See *Volkstelling 1930*, vols. 6–7 (Batavia: Department van Ekonomische Zaken, 1933–36). In 1954, on the cusp of Indonesia's first general election, Rémy Madinier estimated that the entire reading public stood at no more than 3% of the entire population (1.5 million people) based on newspaper subscription figures. That said, he also recognized that print culture had many afterlives, and the information it contained often continued to circulate in various ways that did not involve individual reading. See Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 127.

[50] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 37–47.

that connected Islam and Marxism were very much part of the phenomenon Anderson named print capitalism and exercised the same integrative function. However, they did so not independently of, or in opposition to, existing identities. These threads of pergerakan print culture overlaid and drew strength from an already extant sense of "nation-ness." This was the sense of being brothers and sisters in the global community of Muslims, the ummah, and all the values associated with that identity. Within this dual framework of shared "nation-ness," some Indies Muslims invoked both the ummah and the identities and values associated with the international Communist movement. Tan Malaka's writings, for example, clearly imagine Indies Muslims as part of broader worlds, both the world of *Dar al-Islam* (the abode of Islam) and the Communist *oikouménē* once called the Second World.[51] In this Tan Malaka was not alone: he had attended the Colonial East and World Revolution course taught by the Tartar Muslim Communist Mirsaid Sultangaliev at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East (Kommunisticheskĭi Universitet Trudyashchikhsya Vostoka), and Sultangaliev held similar views about the utility of Communism for Muslims.[52] For nationalists such as Tan Malaka, the field of connectedness created by print capitalism dovetailed with an existing field of connectedness: a sense of membership in the ummah, a membership sustained by the circulation of texts, pilgrims, traders, and scholars, as Ronit Ricci eloquently shows in *Islam Translated*.[53] Each drew strength from the other in knitting Indies Muslims into a cohesive imagined community, a community that nursed within itself the imagined potential to repeal the eclectic, hybridized, and (ultimately) ephemeral imperial-tutelary identity fostered by the Dutch colonial state. In its place, they imagined a community of Muslims that was simultaneously part of the ummah as well as of the nation-transcending world of proletarian solidarity.[54]

[51] Dar al-Islam is literally translated as "the abode of Islam," but is perhaps best understood in terms of Marshall Hodgson's "Islamdom," the ecumenical cognate of "Christendom." For Tan Malaka's conception of anticolonial Marxist and Muslim solidarity see Kelvin Ng, "All the Poor and Wretched: Islam and the Politics of Difference in Tan Malaka's Marxist Writings, 1922–1930," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 41 (2021): 389–403.

[52] Vanja Hamzić, "Mir-Said Sultan-Galiev and the Idea of Muslim Marxism: Empire, Third World(s) and Praxis," *Third World Quarterly* 37, no. 11 (2016): 2054.

[53] Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

[54] Some of these visions could be glib about the religious and ethnic minorities of the NEI / Indonesia, conveniently ignoring the very real prospect of tensions engendered by mapping a vision of Islamic society onto a reality of religious plurality. That said, many of the activists influenced by both Islam and Marxism were steadfast in their insistence on tolerance toward and inclusion of all

I consciously chose to prioritize vernacular print culture, particularly in Bahasa Indonesia, in my analysis of the confluences between Islam and Marxism. This analysis privileges activists' and politicians' perspectives with the knowledge that they might not always be fully honest or rigorous about their stated positions. By eschewing colonial archives as my primary point of entry into the past, I avoid reproducing the assumptions and predispositions of the Dutch colonial government, which was inclined to perceive Bolshevik conspiracies around every corner.[55] Its postindependence counterpart, the Indonesian republic, was less hysterical about Marxism but was so rarely able to articulate a coherent state ideology beyond Pancasila that nonarchival sources paint a broader and more accurate picture of Indonesian political dynamism than archival sources do. Moreover, an enormous amount of vernacular print culture remains unexplored. One 1971 index of Indonesian newspapers listed over one thousand newspapers published across fifty-five cities throughout the archipelago, the majority of which began publication during the colonial period.[56] Indeed, several of the newspapers and pamphlets that I examine have never been analyzed anywhere else.

The expression of pergerakan and republican political visions in Bahasa Indonesia, the lingua franca turned nationalist vehicle, merits special attention. In *Language and Power*, Anderson argued that the pergerakan commitment to Bahasa Indonesia should be understood as an "enterprise for the mastery of a gigantic cultural crisis, and a partly subconscious project for the assumption of modernity within the modalities of an autonomous and autochthonous social-political tradition."[57] This attempt by the pergerakan to construct a linguistic medium for the conveyance of new, radical discourses was driven by the adaptation of global discourses for an Indonesian context, and for Indonesian consumption. This was a task that Javanese was ill-suited for, given its reproduction of social hierarchies and the fact that few non-Javanese were fluent in it. Dutch-medium education was reserved

religions, including the top republican leaders who promulgated the national principles of Pancasila, as well as virtually all of the PKI's top leadership throughout this period.

[55] Takashi Shiraishi, *The Phantom World of Digul: Policing as Politics in Colonial Indonesia, 1926–1941* (Singapore and Kyoto: NUS Press and Kyoto University Press, 2021), 86–87.

[56] G. Raymond Nunn, *Indonesian Newspapers: An International Union List* (Taipei: Chinese Materials and Research Aids Service Center, 1971).

[57] Anderson, *Language and Power*, 124. Bahasa Indonesia is based on Malay, the mercantile lingua franca of the linguistically diverse Malay Archipelago, which was adopted in a simplified form by the Dutch colonial state as a language of colonial administration. The Dutch also sought to "develop" Malay as part of their "civilizing mission," and sponsored publication of nonthreatening Malay literature through the Balai Pustaka (Bureau of Literature).

for native elites, which relegated Dutch to a position of marginal relevance in the project of translation. As James Siegel put it, "The lingua franca [of Malay, transmuted by the pergerakan into Bahasa Indonesia] brought not only messages from groups present in the Indies; it brought stories from most of the globe as well. This moment has been seen to be the beginning of Indonesian nationalism. It is important to see that this nationalism began not in the nation and not with the colonial forces but with the reception of messages from Europe and Asia."[58]

In the NEI, the reception of messages like democratic socialism from the Netherlands, or revolutionary Communism from the USSR, necessarily required said messages to engage at least partially with Islam, given Islam's sheer number of adherents. It was also necessary because of Islam's enduring political salience: many Muslims questioned how their faith ought to be manifest in politics. Just as the adoption of Bahasa Indonesia as a discursive medium was essential to the maturation of the pergerakan, Muslims' attempts to grapple with powerful new ideologies like Communism were central to pergerakan political activity. The adoption/codification of a lingua franca and the adaptation of new ideas went hand in hand since the development of a new language was fundamentally an exercise in mediating the world while also crystallizing Indonesian-ness. With that in mind, it is not surprising that Islamic identity and Marxist ideas could be engaged productively within this anticolonial, nation-building project.

It is important to note that while the pergerakan activists' writings examined here often used the term "modern" (*moderen*) to describe themselves, their aims, and their intellectual reference points, this was ultimately an aspirational rather than objective term. I do not assume the existence or validity of an objective condition known as "modernity," and when it is used here, it is used in reference to specific phenomena like the Islamic modernism of Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida. I use the terms "modern" and "modernity" insofar as pergerakan activists themselves used these words to signify to a desirable state of being, or an anticipated social condition.

Finally, print culture necessarily includes fiction. This book allots significant space to fictional sources such as novels, plays, and poetry because they constitute repositories of ideas in circulation, and because they provide glimpses into the tenor of the times. In *Situated Testimonies*, Laurie Sears presents a compelling argument for paying attention to fictional narratives

[58] Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution*, 6.

as historical sources. Sears points out that the publication of literature in the pergerakan-anointed language of Bahasa Indonesia was an inherently political act: it was effectively the construction of a "minor canon" of literature in direct opposition to the publications of the state-sponsored publishing house, the Balai Pustaka (i.e., the "major canon").[59] The Balai Pustaka had been set up by the colonial government in 1917 to encourage the development of native Indies literature as part of the Dutch civilizing mission, but naturally its sensibilities were parochial, and only politically correct submissions were accepted for publication. Pergerakan works of fiction from Semaun's *Hikayat Kadirun* (1920) to Xarim M. S.'s *Hadji Dadjal* (1941) were manifestations of what Hilmar Farid and Razif called *bacaan liar* (wild literature), not only because their contents were perceived as subversive but also because they were written in Bahasa Indonesia, the deterritorialized and inclusive nationalist language of collectivity.[60] This was inherently political, as Sears argues:

> These writers took the language of the Chinese Indies readers [the commercial lingua franca of Malay, as opposed to *dienst* Malay, the language of command used by overseers and bureaucrats, or highbrow Riau Malay, promoted by the Balai Pustaka] and made the language one of the languages of colonial modernity and the major language of the popular Malay press in the Indies. To return to Deleuze and Guattari's identification of the process through which a "minor literature" is created alongside a major language . . . [Tirto and his colleagues] deterritorialized lingua franca Malay as the market language of the archipelago and reterritorialized it as the major language of the growing nationalist movement of the Dutch Indies, displacing both Dutch and Javanese. . . . For these writers, the act of writing and publishing in "low" Malay, a language frowned upon by patriarchal Dutch colonial scholars, was political in itself, whether what they wrote was seen to be political or not.[61]

Accordingly, I examine several novels in Bahasa Indonesia because their very existence was an expression of the desire to shape an imagined community

[59] Laurie J. Sears, *Situated Testimonies: Dread and Enchantment in an Indonesian Literary Archive* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2013), 56.

[60] Hilmar Farid and Razif, "Batjaan Liar in the Dutch East Indies"; Sears, *Situated Testimonies*, 56.

[61] Sears, *Situated Testimonies*, 70. Brossart and Klingberg describe a similar process, with similar effects, in the Yiddish press during the early twentieth century. See Alain Brossart and Sylvie Klingberg, *Revolutionary Yiddishland: A History of Jewish Radicalism*, trans. David Fernbach (New York: Verso, 2016), 59.

distinct from that imagined by the colonial state. In both their content and the language employed, pergerakan novels alluded to alternative visions for the Indies, visions of a free Indonesia invested with their hopes for an equitable and prosperous society. Analyzing such novels allows us to glimpse Indonesians' motivations and desires, what Hayden White calls "a range of feelings induced by the experience of an extraordinary historical condition."[62] Through novels, we can understand the social, emotive, and imaginary landscapes that fostered conciliations of Islam and Marxism.

Approaching Marxism

Marxism, when referred to here, should not be assumed to mean the ideology of the Leninist-Stalinist vanguard party that embraces a purported dictatorship of the proletariat as its inevitable goal, what the critical Marxist historian Maxime Rodinson termed a "Neo-Marxist totalitarian synthesis."[63] Even the PKI actively pivoted away from such an understanding of Marxism. Marxism in both theory and practice is as diverse as Islam, and it should be axiomatic that there are divergent interpretations of Marx's ideas, including within Indonesia itself. As Rodinson succinctly put it, "There is not just *one* Marxism, but *several* Marxisms, all with a common core, it is true, but also with many divergences, each version being as legitimate as any other."[64] Similarly, Harry Verhoeven has argued that socialism, whether as a hazy ideal or manifest in concrete policies, was routinely creatively adapted in the global South, and the Indonesian tendency to blend Islam and socialism has cognates in Iran and Sudan.[65] Where I use the term "Communist" or "Communism," it is because the source in question does, or an individual or organization specifically identifies as such. The same goes for socialism.[66] Even key PKI leaders like Darsono would sometimes use the terms "Communist" and "socialist" interchangeably in describing themselves.[67] In

[62] Hayden White, "Introduction: Historical Fiction, Fictional History, and Historical Reality," *Rethinking History* 9 (2005): 149.

[63] Rodinson, *Marxism and the Muslim World*, 5.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Harry Verhoeven, "'What Is to Be Done?': Rethinking Socialism(s) and Socialist Legacies in a Postcolonial World," *Third World Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (2021): 458–59.

[66] "Socialism," when utilized here instead of "Marxism," constitutes support for a set of policies that derive from the acceptance of Marxist critiques of capitalism and imperialism. These include organizing labor, legitimizing strikes, nationalization of certain industries, state monopolization of crucial resources, wealth redistribution, and a prioritizing a robust social safety net.

[67] Darsono, "Kommunisma dan Islamisma," *Sinar Hindia*, February 15, 1921.

the absence of explicit identification, I use the more general terms "Marxism" and "Marxist" to describe the political leanings of the individuals and organizations studied here, because the sources canvassed here demonstrate clear engagement with Marx's critiques of capital and empire.

This is true even of politicians to whom the label "Communist" or "socialist" is rarely, if ever, applied, such as Mohammad Hatta and Haji Omar Said Tjokroaminoto. Their writings show that they perceived utility in Marx's ideas, and as such I describe them as Marxist, or influenced by Marx. I take inspiration from Rodinson in my admittedly broad conceptualization of "Marxist":

> One can say, however, that Marxism is the complex of ideas and attitudes which contributed to the formation of these [neo-Marxist totalitarian] syntheses. To anybody with an open mind it is clear that one can judge each of these ideas and attitudes outside of the system or systems in which they feature. One can judge them on their own merit, accept them or reject them, without necessarily being obliged to accept the ideological complex in which they are integrated.[68]

This is exactly what numerous Indonesian activists and politicians did. I make no clear conceptual distinction between socialism, Communism, and Marxism for the pre-1945 period because of the fluidity of what these labels denote in an Indonesian context. All drew selectively on Marx's ideas without feeling beholden to a totalizing philosophy. What each term signifies does not map neatly onto how socialism or Communism developed in Europe; the PKI and various Marxist parties did not necessarily work toward overthrowing the government through a revolutionary seizure of power, nor did Indonesian socialists necessarily pursue parliamentary participation as the main thrust of their political activity, as social democratic or labor parties had in Europe. Especially in the context of anticolonial resistance, there were a multitude of ways in which the colonial state could be resisted, accommodated, or harnessed, and the political positions of Marx-influenced pergerakan activists were often so similar as to make a clear-cut distinction between socialist and Communist impossible. Alain Brossart and Sylvie Klingberg's characterization of Jewish Marxists in Eastern Europe is instructive in this regard:

[68] Rodinson, *Marxism and the Muslim World*, 6.

> We sought, accordingly, to give voice in an equitable manner to representatives of the three major currents of red Yiddishland: the Communists, the Bund, and Poale Zion. Reading their stories certainly makes it easy to measure the complex reality that these three labels cover: Communist may mean Stalinist, but also Trotskyist or Bandlerite. In the period between the world wars, the Bund swung between Communism and social democracy, while the trajectories of Poale Zion allegiance were also multiple, from Moscow to Tel Aviv.[69]

In a similar vein, it is much more useful to think about NEI/Indonesian Marxism as a discursive spectrum, a shifting and contested discursive field, rather than a matter of party allegiance or organizational affiliation with the Second or Third International. Just like Eastern European Jewish radicals, Indonesians could look to two cities, to both Moscow and Mecca, for inspiration while remaining grounded in Indonesian realities.

The relation between signifier and signified does, of course, shift over time. By the Indonesian Revolution (1945–49), labels like "socialist" and "Communist" came to connote different policy approaches but functioned primarily as icons of factional allegiance. The Communist factions strongly associated with Musso and Tan Malaka, for example, favored heavily conditional negotiations with the Dutch, and insisted on full independence no matter the cost in blood and treasure. They also openly embraced nationalization of key industries like shipping and commodity agriculture, and even began implementing land redistribution to smallholders during the revolution. The socialist factions led by Sjahrir and Amir Sjarifruddin, however, were more hesitant toward land redistribution and nationalization (though not necessarily opposed to it). They favored preserving unity in the face of intense Dutch military and economic pressure by avoiding polarizing policies that might undermine the already shaky finances of the nascent republic.

Even so, the labels "socialist" and "Communist" remained fluid. When the veteran PKI leader Musso's return to Indonesia threatened to undercut his authority, Amir Sjarifruddin famously declared that his wing of the Socialist Party, and even his prewar Gerindo party, had been crypto-Communist all along. Tan Malaka was able to unite a diverse range of parties and militias behind his policy platform, under the umbrella organization Persatuan Perjuangan (Struggle Union) and in the parliamentary bloc Sayap Kiri (Left

[69] Brossat and Klingberg, *Revolutionary Yiddishland*, 6.

Wing), many of whom did not identify as Communist. Understanding themselves to be working in the same field of political activity and pursuing similar goals, it was not implausible for politicians to slip between the labels "socialist" and "Communist" as political expedience required.

After independence, the policy platforms that these labels denoted began to crystallize into something clearer. Throughout the parliamentary democracy period (1950–59), the PKI increasingly became the dominant leftist force in national politics, eclipsing other Marx-influenced movements like the Partai Sosialis Indonesia and the Partai Murba (Murba Party) in the 1955 elections. At that point, it becomes meaningful to speak of a distinction between Communism and other movements influenced by Marx's ideas, since to be a Communist meant formal affiliation with the PKI. From that period onward, I rely consistently on the terms "Communist" and "Communism" when describing the PKI and its affiliates, "socialist" and "socialism" when describing the PSI, and so on. Even so, there were plenty of Marx-influenced politicians throughout the political spectrum, from Masjumi parliamentarians, to members of Soekarno's Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI, Indonesian National Party), to representatives of minor Communist parties like Acoma (Generation of Communist Youth).

Approaching Islam

The intuitive irreconcilability of Islam and Marxism is deeply ingrained in both popular and academic discourse. Perhaps the Cold War's ontological legacy has preserved strong associations between Communism and words like "godless" or "atheistic." Meanwhile, the paradigmatic "problematization" of Islam since September 11, 2001, has crystallized subtle but strong associations between Islam and adjectives like "intolerant" or "retrograde." These assumptions and discourses inflect the work of scholars like Ben Fowkes and Bülent Gökay, whose otherwise helpful anthology on the relationship between Islam and Communism in the former USSR is permeated by references to "unholy alliance" and "uneasy alliance."[70] This assumption of incompatibility needs to be carefully examined, for the mass of evidence gathered in this book suggests that Islam and Marxism were often

[70] Fowkes and Gökay, *Muslims and Communists in Post-transition States*. See also Ben Fowkes and Bülent Gökay, "Unholy Alliance: Muslims and Communists—an Introduction," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 25:1 (2009): 1–31.

comfortably blended in the NEI / Indonesia. These ranged from clear-cut attempts to theorize compatibility to the eliding of contradictions: many participants in the anticolonial struggle did not see the need to explicitly reconcile their Islamic identities with their Marxist inspirations, since both were social realities of the NEI / Indonesia, and both had a hand in shaping their worldviews.

Marshall Hodgson's concept of Islamicate civilization is essential in framing this phenomenon. This refers to the "social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even when found among non-Muslims."[71] Both non-Muslims and Muslims influenced Islamicate civilization, and elements of Islamicate civilization can be found in societies without Muslim-majority populations. It is therefore unhelpful to view the political, cultural, or artistic products of Islamicate civilizations as intrinsically Islamic or un-Islamic. For example, despite the unambiguous Islamic theological prohibition on depicting the human form, figural art, as seen in the immaculate miniature paintings produced by Ottoman, Safavid, or Mughal royal ateliers, is neither Islamic or un-Islamic. Such figural art is the product of Islamicate civilizations, which drew on both Islamic and non-Islamic influences, in the context of religiously and ethnically plural societies in constant dialogue with external cultural trends. Ethnic or religious minorities, along with a broad spectrum of cultural influences, all contributed to the cultural output of Islamicate civilizations. In a similar vein, confluences of Islam and Marxism in NEI/Indonesia were the products of a plural society, and not some kind of deviation from an established Islamic norm. The varied political influences on Indies society, ranging from Dutch conceptions of social democracy, to Javanese messianic folk beliefs, to modernist *salafi* notions of reconstituting Islam as a viable political ideology, all helped shape the political visions of pergerakan activists. This process of admixture is and was integral to Islamicate civilizations, so it should not be entirely surprising that multiple Islamicate civilizations, including Iran, Pakistan, Egypt, and Indonesia, produced attempts to put Islam and Marxism in productive dialogue during the twentieth century.

Specific to Indonesia, one important ingredient in the process of admixture, or creative adaptation of Islamic traditions, was the rise of modernist or reformist Islamic jurisprudence during the early twentieth century. Beginning

[71] Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 59.

with Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and further elaborated by Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida, this was an approach to *fiqh* that prioritized adapting Islamic praxis to contemporary conditions, with direct inference from the Qur'an and hadith, and jettisoned reliance on traditional sources of authority.[72] In the Indonesian context, modernist Muslims generally identified with the label *kaum muda* (lit. young ones). These Islamic reformists became increasingly numerous and influential during the twentieth century, advocating direct engagement with the textual sources of *fiqh* and theology to provide era-appropriate interpretations of Islamic orthopraxis, as opposed to reliance on traditional sources of jurisprudential legitimacy in the form of the books of classic *fiqh* written by famous scholars/commentators. These books were commonly studied in *pondok*, traditional schools that emphasized mastering Arabic, Qur'anic recital, rote learning, and discipleship within the Shafi'i *madhhab* (loosely translatable as guild or school of thought) of jurisprudence. More often than not, these books were concise compendiums of rulings by famous jurists within a particular *madhhab*, known as *mukhtasar*, which provided a summary of legal axioms without necessarily explaining how the jurist had arrived at these judgments. This approach to jurisprudence and exegesis was one pejoratively characterized by the *kaum muda* as *taqlid*, blind obedience to the established legal maxims of past jurists, without concern for whether these maxims were still relevant. The traditionalists who adhered to the unquestionable rulings of classical jurists were labeled *kaum tua* by the *kaum muda* and were often castigated as *kolot* (stodgy or archaic). By contrast, the *kaum muda* championed the exercise of *ijtihad* (jurisprudential interpretation) to align Islamic praxis with the changing social, economic, and political conditions brought by Dutch imperialism.[73] This modernist approach to *fiqh* facilitated both conservative and progressive interpretations of Islamic praxis, but it unquestionably opened the door for numerous Indonesian Muslims—both religious specialists and laymen—to formulate innovative articulations of Islam that they felt were suited to their historical moment.

In broader historical perspective, Shahab Ahmed's *What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* provides a powerful framework for understanding how Islam and Marxism might be put in productive dialogue.

[72] John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, 4th ed. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 33–62.

[73] Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900–1942* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

Ahmed rigorously and unflinchingly interrogates the seeming contradictions inherent in Islam as a sociohistorical phenomenon. Stepping outside of theology and dogma to consider Islam in its historical entirety, Ahmed questions how we can reconcile the legalist Islam of the *madhahib* (schools of jurisprudence) with the gnostic mysticism of Sufism and its associated philosophical tradition (what he calls the Sufi-philosophical amalgam), which ultimately made claims to a higher reality/truth (*haqiqat*) outside of the Sharia.[74] While influential sixteenth-century Sufi reformers like Ahmad Sirhindi were able to reconcile the two by promoting Sufism as complementary to Sharia, and obedience to Sharia as prerequisite for efficacious Sufi praxis, the fact remains that for much of its history the Sufi-philosophical amalgam clearly claimed to transcend Sharia. While complex and stratified around spiritual lineages, many of its precepts were also widely accepted by the masses.[75] Given how closely identified Islam is with Sharia, can we say that Sufism, so prevalent and so influential across the Muslim world for so long, is Islamic?

Similarly, Ahmed questions how we can square legalist Islam with the enduring influence of the teacher, scholar, and poet Hafiz of Shiraz, whose *Divan* (Complete Poems) is and was an essential component of Islamicate Persianate civilizations from the Balkans to South Asia.[76] Hafiz's *Divan* is diegetically structured around the pleasures of drinking wine in the context of the social gathering known as the *majlis*, while reciting a form of love poetry known as the *ghazal*, with the strong insinuation that love is utterly central to Islam, trumping even justice, faith, and asceticism.[77] This "Hafizian discourse," as Ahmed describes it, is inextricably intertwined with Islamicate civilization, and engages directly with both *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and *tasawwuf* (Sufi mysticism). At the same time, its narrative and structure openly defies the prohibition on alcohol, and even questions the primacy of the Sharia as the Islamic norm *sans pareil*. As Ahmed points out, children in Persiantate cultures learn Hafiz's poetry alongside the Qur'an, and examples of Hafizian discourse (from Hafiz's poetry to various commentaries) were the most widely consumed texts in both manuscript and print form from the Balkans to Bengal.[78] How, he asks, can a book that has helped shape "the mode and mechanisms of self-expression in the largest part of the Islamic

[74] Shahab Ahmed, *What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 25.
[75] Ibid., 31.
[76] Ibid., 44.
[77] Ibid., 36–39.
[78] Ibid., 44.

world," yet which also "takes as its definitive themes the ambiguous exploration of wine-drinking and (often homo-)erotic love as well as a disparaging attitude to observant ritual piety," be considered Islamic?

Ahmed argues that the legalist faith in the primacy of the Sharia and the Sufi claims of access to a higher *haqiqat* are not mutually exclusive in practice; not all tensions have to be resolved, or all contradictions smoothened out for "Islamic" to exist as a meaningful category of analysis. Neither phenomenon is more Islamic than the other, and each has shaped the development of the other in fundamental ways. Ahmed's arguments about Islamic ontology are much more subtle than can be summarized here, but his observation that *fiqh* and Sharia are no more or less definitively "Islamic" than Sufi mysticism, art, or architecture is an important one.

Without doing Ahmed's excellent book justice, it is sufficient for my purposes to point out that Islam, as a sociohistorical phenomenon, has historically contained many seeming contradictions without fracturing or diluting a sense of Islamic identity among its adherents. As Ahmed eloquently puts it,

> These ideas and behaviors [the Sufi-philosophical amalgam] constitute a commonplace and standard part of the ways in which the cultivated and thoughtful Muslims who engaged in them thought and lived as Muslims. These societies of persons thought and lived these things without regarding themselves as transgressing thereby what it meant to be a Muslim—indeed, these ideas and behaviors were construed, as paradoxical as it might seem, to be not only in harmony with, but actually as somehow articulating the meaning and truth of Islam.[79]

The relationship between Islam and Marxism in the NEI / Indonesia was an extension of the phenomenon Ahmed describes. Islam was and is broad enough to encompass a plurality of competing interpretations and applications, even within one nation. To some, Marxism resonated with an Islamic ethos, and could potentially make certain aspects of Islam manifest. To paraphrase Ahmed, many of the sources examined here express "the assumed and operational norms" of pergerakan activists; Islamic identity was a lived reality for most, and the Marxist critique of capitalism and imperialism was essential to understanding the why and how of resisting

[79] Ibid., 81.

colonialism.[80] Islam and Marxist ideas were both operative norms that pergerakan activists could not afford to ignore if they wanted to succeed, and they themselves were shaped by both Islam and Marxism to varying degrees. Given the centrality of Islam to the NEI / Indonesia, and the dynamism of Marxist ideas in the stifling atmosphere of colonial *rust en orde* (tranquility and order), it is not surprising that there were people who freely drew on both without scrupling to theorize compatibility, while others explicitly sought to reconcile Islam and Marxism.

Ultimately, the phenomena studied here, from explicit Islamic Communism to various confluences of Islam and socialism, are significant because they are understudied instances progressive Islam. This was, in Carool Kersten's formulation, "a Muslim discourse which seeks to navigate between outright secularism, bland traditionalism, and uncompromisingly literalist interpretations of the Islamic teachings," and many such attempts have been made throughout the twentieth century.[81] From Soviet Muslims like Mirsaid Sultangaliev to the grassroots socialist movements led by Maulana Bhashani in East Pakistan, interpretations of Islam that emphasize socioeconomic justice and equity have surfaced far too often for scholars to ignore them as a cohesive phenomenon.[82] As with liberation theology in Latin America, leftist interpretations of Islam deserve sustained scholarly attention, whether they manifest in Iran or Egypt, Pakistan or Indonesia. The strong tendency to dismiss Islam's conciliation with Marxism as syncretic, eccentric, or cynically instrumentalist is part of Orientalism's long shadow, further distorted by the ideological lenses of the Cold War.

Leftist interpretations of Islam in the rest of the Muslim world cannot be conveniently dismissed as aberrations concocted for the convenience of ruling Communist regimes, or veiled attempts to reinforce Islam's relevance.

[80] Ibid., 55. Speaking of the foreword to an album of figural art (which was quite clearly prohibited in canonical hadith) owned by the Ottoman sultan Ahmed I (1603–17), Shahab Ahmed has this to say: "One sees arrayed here the epistemological structures of philosophical religion—and not in a manner or in a discursive register that is seeking to *argue for* a philosophical or Sufi position, or to *argue against* a juridical one, but rather in a manner and register that forthrightly expresses the *assumed and operational norms* of the educated and self-consciously Muslim elite of the Balkans to Bengal complex" (p. 55).

[81] Carool Kersten, "Islam, Cultural Hybridity and Cosmopolitanism: New Muslim Intellectuals on Globalization," *Journal of International and Global Studies* 1, no. 1 (2009): 89–113.

[82] Layli Uddin, "In the Land of Eternal Eid: Maulana Bhashani and the Political Mobilisation of Peasants and Lower-Class Urban Workers in East Pakistan, c. 1930–1971" (PhD diss., Royal Holloway, University of London, 2016); Alexandre A. Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslim National Communism in the Soviet Union: A Revolutionary Strategy for the Colonial World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); Khizar Humayun Ansari, *The Emergence of Socialist Thought among North Indian Muslims, 1917–1947* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Although he makes many salient points, Rodinson is skeptical of Muslim attempts to fuse Marxist ideas with Islamic precepts, or similar Communist projects.[83] Rodinson is likely correct that such endeavors are anachronistic and opportunistic, but I contend that these anachronisms are part of Indonesians' honest attempts at creative synthesis, a precursor to the "critical syncretism" Chen Kuan-Hsing has championed.[84] For those of us who live in formerly colonized societies, hoping to escape the long ontological shadow of imperialism, there are no other options. The alternative to creative synthesis is to accept our unwelcome legacy of the colonizer's intellectual hegemony, or to continuously seek a new incarnation of an imagined halcyon that preceded colonization. Indonesians' blending of Islamic identity and Marxist ideas is one instance of Islamicate societies struggling to articulate plans for a fairer, more compassionate society without resorting to blind imitation of Euro-American or Soviet socioeconomic models. This phenomenon was fundamentally progressive, not a quirk born of ignorance and unwarranted optimism. While the anti-Communist massacres of 1965–66 definitively shut the door on overt political conciliation between Islam and Marxism in Indonesia, Muslim progressives who directly engage with Marx's ideas (for example, via Hassan Hanafi or Ali Shariati), or who stress the importance of socioeconomic equity in Islam, remain a visible presence in Indonesian intellectual life today.[85] This living, breathing legacy necessitates a clear understanding of this phenomenon's historical roots, which may help revive modalities of Islamic piety that are suppressed today.

[83] Rodinson, *Marxism and the Muslim World*, 48–52.

[84] Kuan-Hsing Chen, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

[85] Kersten, "Islam, Cultural Hybridity and Cosmopolitanism," 95, 10; also see Eko Prasetyo, *Islam Kiri: Melawan Kapitalisme Modal Dari Wacan Menunju Gerakan* (Yogyakarta: Insist Press, 2002), and *Islam Bergerak*, https://islambergerak.com/.

1

Incubating Communism in the Netherlands East Indies

On November 12, 1926, an anticolonial uprising led and organized by the PKI broke out in the colonial capital of Batavia, followed swiftly by similar rebellions in Banten, Padang, and Surabaya. This attempt to topple the colonial state was ill-fated from the outset: the colonial police had long been aware of the clandestine preparations for rebellion, and a series of arrests in early 1926 nearly crippled the PKI's organizational capacity. The colonial state was jolted by this irruption, which broke the facade of Dutch *rust en orde* (tranquility and order); authorities immediately blamed it upon a transnational Communist conspiracy. The colonial state's own postmortem, however, revealed a much more complex picture. Padang in West Sumatra and Banten in West Java were peopled by especially pious Muslims, and many participants were motivated by Islamic teachings, freely deploying Islamic rhetoric of ending infidel rule.

Beginning with this rupture in the smooth fabric of colonial rule, this chapter examines how both Islam and Communism motivated participants in the 1926–27 uprisings. But what conditions facilitated the admixture of Islamic and Communist ideas that moved ordinary folk to risk their lives? Why were these ideas so potent? I attempt an answer by working backward from the uprisings, examining a range of vernacular newspapers that explicitly theorized compatibility between Islam and Communism. I then focus on two newspapers, *Djago! Djago!* and *Pemandangan Islam*, to showcase the sophistication of Islamic Communist discourse. This is followed by an examination of the PKI's engagement with Islam, paying special attention to the discursive contributions of women. I end the chapter with an analysis of two anticolonial novels authored by Communists with clear Islamic sensibilities. Collectively, this chapter highlights various modalities of conciliation between Islam and Communism, their sophistry and appeal, and historical conditions that made conciliation possible.

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Government-commissioned reports explaining participants' motivations in West Sumatra and ethnographic data collected by Michael C. Williams on the uprisings' participants in Banten, Java, strongly suggest that Islam was an important legitimating force in these Communist-led uprisings. Participants rebelled knowing full well the military might of the colonial state, recently exercised in the protracted but ultimately successful Aceh War (1873–1904) and the 1908 Antitax Rebellion in West Sumatra, so these ideas clearly had some potency.[1] The blend of Islam and Communism that motivated participants did not spontaneously appear and suddenly gain traction; it was predicated upon a rich seam of Islamic Communist print culture that preceded the uprisings by years.

The uprisings were planned during the PKI's conference in Prambanan, Java, in December 1924. No specific date was set for the uprising, but regional branches were supposed to be ready by mid-1926.[2] It was supposed to begin with labor union strikes in Surabaya and Padang, which would presumably evolve into a general strike and trigger revolution. It was opposed from its inception by senior PKI leaders like Tan Malaka and Darsono (see Figure 1.1), though many were already in exile and unable to effectively influence such plans from afar. PKI leaders were reacting partially to pressures from the ground: rank-and-file members had their expectations aroused after years of mass rallies and strikes. Moreover, the brief window of opportunity presented by the weakness of the Dutch government—and its consequent willingness to offer concessions—at the end of the Great War, when a social democratic coalition nearly took power in the Netherlands, had also raised hopes.[3] Their optimism was at odds with the efficacy of the colonial security apparatus. The limited uprisings in Batavia, Padang, Banten, and Surabaya were without coordinated leadership and suppressed by force within weeks. Over thirteen thousand were arrested, forty-five hundred interned, and over eight hundred eventually exiled to the penal colony of Boven Digoel in Western New Guinea.[4]

For participants, Islam constituted the medium through which anticolonial resistance was rationalized and justified, while the PKI served as

[1] Ken Young, *Islamic Peasants and the State: The 1908 Anti-tax Rebellion in West Sumatra* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994).

[2] McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 311.

[3] Partai Komunis Indonesia and Komintern, "Notulen van vergaderingen van het Subsecretariaat voor India en Indonesië. Met bijlagen. 1926," Archief Komintern—Partai Komunis Indonesia, Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis.

[4] McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 353.

the most effective vehicle for mobilizing resistance to the colonial state. This confluence made sense in the context of economic precarity: the expansion of plantation monoculture, as well as the increased burden of taxation and labor obligations, combined to incite passionate opposition to colonial economic and political structures. The colonial government requisitioned up to 10% of the annual rice harvest in Banten in the late 1910s, fueling peasant discontent.[5] Similarly, in West Sumatra in the 1920s, a tax on family homes was introduced, alongside a delimitation of the use of woodlands and the projected introduction of a new land tax.[6] In the context of severe hardship with few avenues for redress, the PKI increasingly seemed like the most effective vehicle for mounting resistance. As early as 1919, the PKI leader Semaun (see Figure 1.2) had spoken against rice requisitioning at a three-thousand-strong public rally in Banten, but the central PKI leadership was nevertheless wrong-footed by the upsurge in popular discontent in 1926, and unable to fully control its affiliates in the epicenters of the uprisings.[7] Rather than being mobilized by the PKI, participants themselves drew on the organizational structures and mystique of the PKI to gather support for the dangerous enterprise of revolt, while retaining distinctly Islamic rhetoric to justify their actions throughout.

During the mid-1910s, North Banten in West Java had been a stronghold of Sarekat Islam. The loci of authority there had remained distinctly traditional, with the leadership of Sarekat Islam branches usually dominated by local ulama, traders and minor nobility.[8] These same leaders came to dominate local PKI leadership. They maintained their status as, and derived their legitimacy from their identity as, *kyai*, ulama, or nobles while becoming local PKI leaders. As the uprisings gained momentum, they invoked their traditional authority alongside the PKI's anticolonial message to mobilize resistance.[9] Unsurprisingly, part of the rationalization for anticolonial

[5] Williams, *Communism, Religion and Revolt in Banten*, 128.

[6] B. J. O. Schrieke, "The Course of the Communist Movement on the West Coast of Sumatra, Part I (Political Section), Report of the Investigative Committee Appointed under the Governmental Decree of February 13, 1927, No. 1a," in *The Communist Uprisings of 1926–1927 in Indonesia: Key Document*, ed. Harry J. Benda and Ruth T. McVey (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1960), 99.

[7] Williams, *Communism, Religion and Revolt in Banten*, 4.

[8] Ibid., 118–23.

[9] E. Gobee and Ranneft Sumitro, "The Report of the Commission Installed by Government Decision No. X of January 26, 1927, to Investigate the Disturbances Which Took Place in Various Parts of the Residency of Bantam in November, 1926," in *The Communist Uprisings of 1926–1927 in Indonesia: Key Documents*, ed. Harry J. Benda and Ruth T. McVey (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1960), 40.

resistance provided by these leaders was that working for the colonial state as a *penghulu*, or within the *pangreh praja*, was *haram* (forbidden) because it constituted aiding the infidel enemy of Islam.[10]

This distinctly Islamic idiom of opposition to infidel occupation was a recurring theme and dominated how resistance to the Dutch was articulated in Banten. This echoed the Bantanese ulama's continued support for PKI leaders Alimin and Musso when the PKI formally split from Sarekat Islam in 1923. On that occasion, the Bantanese ulama who dominated the upper echelons of Sarekat Islam's Banten branch had castigated Tjokroaminoto and Sarekat Islam for being too passive and cooperative. Instead of expelling Alimin and Musso, they demanded that Alimin and Musso replace Tjokroaminoto as the leaders of Sarekat Islam.[11] In the words of one participant interviewed by Williams in Banten, "The PKI was the only organization willing to fight for independence. This we respected."[12]

The "Governor General's Report," an analysis of the uprisings submitted to the Ministry of Colonies, also highlighted the role Islam played in motivating participants in other parts of Java. Chapter 7 of the report, titled "The Mohammedan Religion in the Service of Communist Propaganda," cited a PKI pamphlet authored by Tan Malaka in 1926 entitled *Semangat Moeda* (The Spirit of Youth): "Recommended in this pamphlet is the making of propaganda by means of religion in Surakarta, Djogjakarta, Achin and Bandjermasin, among other regions."[13] This report went on to claim that (unnamed) PKI leaders had "taken this advice to heart," and recognized that "although as a Communist one is inwardly not religious . . . it is nevertheless of importance, and even vital for the expansion of Communism, that one should pretend to believe in the purity and sublimity of religion."[14]

[10] Williams, *Communism, Religion and Revolt in Banten*, 122. *Penghulu* refers to a traditional community leader who had been recognized and salaried by the colonial state, who often performed limited religious functions such as presiding over marriages. The *pangreh praja* refers to the native civil service, also known as the *binnenlands bestuur*, which employed both natives and Europeans, although with an immutable glass ceiling between the two.

[11] McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 303.

[12] Williams, *Communism, Religion and Revolt in Banten*, 182.

[13] "The Governor General's Report of January, 1927 (Political Note Concerning the Indonesian Communist Party: Report wherein is summed up information which has come to light concerning the action of the Netherlands Indies Communist Party, a section of the Third International, from July, 1925 up to and including December 1926)," in *The Communist Uprisings of 1926–1927 in Indonesia: Key Documents*, ed. Harry J. Benda and Ruth T. McVey (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1960), 17. Hereafter, "Governor General's Report."

[14] "Governor General's Report," 17.

The Dutch security apparatus interpreted this phenomenon cynically, portraying it as Communist manipulation of credulous, quiescent rural Muslims, but *Semangat Moeda* is thematically consistent with the rest of Tan Malaka's writings. Tan Malaka recognized that revolution was only possible through broad-based unity, so Communism would have to reconcile itself to different religions and communities. *Semangat Moeda* explicitly stated that Sarekat Rakyat (a grassroots organization directly linked to the PKI) members could be from any caste, any profession, and any religion, whether Islam, Christianity, or Confucianism, as long as they hated imperialist oppression and opposed the Dutch.[15] *Semangat Moeda* also clearly showed Tan Malaka's acceptance of the paradigmatic status of Islamic identity, and the importance of invoking that identity to mobilize anticolonial resistance. In it, he argued that the sheer diversity of the NEI allowed the Dutch to divide and conquer, pitting Java against Sumatra against Manado against Ambon, even though all were part of the same Muslim community (*sama rakyat Islam*).[16]

The PKI was also able to enlist the support of pious Muslims in West Sumatra. The PKI's power base lay in Padang Panjang's modernist religious schools, with many younger teachers and students comfortable in their simultaneous commitment to Islam and support for the PKI.[17] This was particularly true of pupils enrolled in a local network of modernist madrasahs, the Sumatra Thawalib schools. They played a significant role in the uprisings, even after their leaders were detained by colonial authorities in 1925.[18] The PKI leadership in Silungkang, West Sumatra, comprised primarily local religious leaders and the merchant class, who agitated against the paramountcy of the collaborationist local nobility, and adopted the PKI slogan of *sama rata sama rasa* (same level, same feelings) with gusto.[19] Like Tan Malaka, PKI members in West Sumatra tended to articulate their conciliation with Islam in terms of a lack of conflict between religion and ideology, arguing that

[15] Tan Malaka, *Semangat Muda* (Bandung: Sega Arsy, 2015) , 72. Sarekat Rakyat (People's Associations) was affiliated with the PKI, growing out of the "red" Sarekat Islam branches that sided with PKI leaders like Semaun when Sarekat Islam and the PKI began to fall out in 1921.

[16] Ibid, 85.

[17] Audrey R. Kahin, "The 1927 Communist Uprising in Sumatra: A Reappraisal," *Indonesia* 62 (1996): 22.

[18] Schrieke, "Political Section of the West Coast of Sumatra Report," 100. madrasahs were Islamic schools often associated with the Modernist Islamic movement of Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida that emanated from Cairo from the late nineteenth century onward. Unlike traditional Javanese *pesantren*, which emphasized discipleship and memorization, madrasahs were not necessarily boarding schools, and often embraced European innovations like standardized grades, classrooms, and curricula.

[19] Ibid.

one's religious and political affiliations were separate issues. This was also the case in Banten: in his sociological "autopsy" of the uprisings submitted to the colonial government in 1929, Dutch sociologist B. J. O. Schrieke stated, "It was explained [by participants Schrieke interviewed] that Communism had nothing to do with nationality or religion, but that it rather was a science like medicine, the technical sciences etc."[20] Meanwhile, a PKI leaflet printed in West Sumatra and distributed in the Minangkabau interior in 1926 cast resistance to the colonial state in an overwhelmingly Islamic idiom, and stressed the relevance of Communism to Islam, using a hodgepodge of Communist and Islamic imagery: "The Communists really do desire what is right, namely, that religion, *adat*, and prosperity should all be improved. . . . Has not Allah said, 'Do not obey the commands of the *kafir* [infidels]?' . . . Our *adat*, which used to govern us . . . have been ruined by the government and the capitalists."[21]

As early as 1923, West Sumatran newspapers such as *Pemandangan Islam*, edited by the Sumatra Thawalib graduate and PKI activist Haji Datuk Batuah, argued for a reconciliation of the "science of the regulation of the community [Communism] for the benefit of the masses living in misery and poverty," which would serve the "intentions and the requirements of the true Islamic faith!"[22] Admittedly, this was not a seamless narrative of compatibility: both *Pemandangan Islam* and the PKI organ *Het Vrije Woord* carried articles condemning nationalism and the Pan-Islamic movement as indulging ethnic chauvinism. However, these same publications also printed articles on the desirability of cooperation between the PKI and Sarekat Islam. *Het Vrije Woord* went so far as to identify Sarekat Islam as the only organization the PKI would cooperate with, and argued that Communist political ideology was in full agreement with the postulates of Islam in the twentieth century; capitalism was castigated for pursuing "unclean aims at odds with the teachings of Islam," and Muslims were "enjoined to fight for freedom in accordance with the prescriptions of the Qur'an."[23] This begs the question of why these discourses of compatibility emerged, and why they were so compelling. The hefty but understudied corpus of pre-1926 pergerakan print culture contains part of the answer. The ideas encapsulated in these sources were

[20] Ibid., 102–3.
[21] B. J. O. Schrieke, "The Causes and Effects of Communism on the West Coast of Sumatra," ed. B. J. O. Schrieke (The Hague and Bandung: W. van Hoeve, 1955), 155.
[22] Ibid., 103.
[23] Ibid.

part of an Indies-wide discourse, and likely colored the motivations of the uprising's participants.

Early Confluences: PKI and Sarekat Islam

The genesis of the Communist movement in the NEI lay in the formation of the Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereeniging (ISDV, the Indies Social-Democratic Association) in Surabaya in 1914. Despite its mainly Dutch constituent members' links to the Netherlands's Sociaal-Democratische Arbeiderspartij (SDAP, Social Democratic Workers' Party), which advocated "ethical gradualism" in the colonies, the ISDV embraced perceptibly radical solutions to the systematic exploitation and transparent suffering of the natives.[24] While initially lacking native members and hobbled by its minuscule membership, the ISDV laid the foundation for the development of Communism in the NEI with the establishment of two periodicals: the Dutch-language *Het Vrije Woord* (The Free Word) in 1915 and the Indonesian-language *Soeara Ra'jat* (The People's Voice) in 1918. Under the stewardship of Dutch Communists Adolf Baars and Henk Sneevliet, the ISDV increasingly developed a working relationship with Sarekat Islam from 1916 onward.[25] Although the highly popular but decentralized Sarekat Islam was more reformist than revolutionary, it was also the largest pergerakan organization of the 1910s. It claimed a total membership of 2.5 million by 1919, and it served as an effective incubator of Communist ideas and methods of organization. This incubation was facilitated by its sheer size as well as its lack of effective central leadership, which allowed regional branches to pursue their own agendas in response to local dynamics.

As early as the 1916 Sarekat Islam congress, the issue of "amalgamating Islamic and Socialist principles" was debated, and attracted support from both the urban *santri* merchant class, as well as younger radicals who came of age in labor unions.[26] A speech given by Hasan Ali Suriati, a wealthy backer

[24] McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 14–15. Ethical gradualism was effectively incremental reform framed within a parochial, colonial frame of reference, with no tangible plan for political devolution or systemic changes to the structure of Indies society.

[25] Irascible and depressive, Sneevliet was nonetheless a committed and effective Communist. He would go on to play an important role in organizing the Chinese Communist Party in the 1920s after being expelled from the Indies. See Tony Saich, *Finding Allies and Making Revolution: The Early Years of the Chinese Communist Party* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 2–4.

[26] McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 20.

of Sarekat Islam from Surabaya, provides a taste of the 1916 congress's distinct flavor: "The righteous teacher, our Lord the Prophet Muhammad, was the man who removed all inequality between the sexes, did away with the difference between ruler and subject, between rank and class. And all these changes were brought about by the Socialist par excellence, by our Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet carried out the Socialist idea of equality in all branches of government affairs; economic and religious policy and administration were ruled by this idea."[27] Such speeches were more aspirational than intellectually rigorous, but they expressed a tangible attraction to the ideology of the ISDV and were remarkably common for Muslim pergerakan activists in the pre-1926 period.

Precisely because neither the ISDV nor Sarekat Islam was initially a political party, this working relationship developed into something resembling the united front strategy of the Comintern: concurrent membership in both organizations was permitted, which had the effect of bringing radical Sarekat Islam members into the ISDV and introducing them to Communist ideas, even as they retained their Islamic worldviews, which continued to inform their articulation of opposition to the colonial state.[28] This eventually led to a popular distinction between "red" and "white" Sarekat Islam branches—regional branches often maintained a high degree of autonomy in relation to Central Sarekat Islam. Through the ISDV, red branches were influenced by Communist ideas and practices, demonstrating greater willingness to confront the colonial state, while white branches (referencing the symbolic color of Islamic piety) indicated the pietist worldviews of their constituent members. The PKI developed through the incubation of Sarekat Islam members within the ISDV, though it did not fully sever its umbilical cord linking it to Sarekat Islam until 1923.[29]

The entwinement of key Sarekat Islam and PKI leaders exemplified the relationship between Islam and Communism in the 1920s. In 1921, the future PKI leader Tan Malaka was introduced to Haji Omar Said Tjokroaminoto, the foremost leader of Sarekat Islam, in Yogyakarta. By this point, tensions between the pro-PKI faction within Sarekat Islam and other, more

[27] Ibid., 363–64.

[28] Ibid., 68. The Comintern officially adopted a united front strategy (of which the PKI was an adherent) advocating cooperation with other anticolonial forces, from 1920 to 1927.

[29] Ibid., 21–23. The ISDV would eventually be reorganized as the League of Communists in the Indies (Perserikatan Komunis di Hindia, PKH) in May 1920, the first Asian member of the Second International, and subsequently change its name to the Communist Party of Indonesia (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI) in 1924.

politically quiescent, members were already palpable. Tan Malaka, a committed Communist who was only just beginning his political career at the time, cooperated closely with Sarekat Islam in the field of education, setting up numerous Sekolah Rakyat (People's Schools) and claimed to be warmly welcomed by Sarekat Islam leaders.[30] In his biography, Tan Malaka spoke glowingly of Tjokroaminoto as well: "Tjokroaminoto also treated me like an old friend," and "Tjokroaminoto left me saying, 'The doors of Sarekat Islam are open to you.'"[31] While Tan Malaka may have been playing up his Islamic credentials with such claims, there is no doubt that core PKI activists such as Semaun and Darsono were personally close to Tjokroaminoto.[32] The affable personal relationships between key Islamic and Communist leaders was indicative of an undercurrent of cooperation and conciliation between Muslims and Communists that would continue to influence pergerakan discourse in years to come, even as the relationship between Sarekat Islam and the PKI soured over time.

Tan Malaka claimed to have received a similarly warm reception at a 1921 Sarekat Islam meeting in Surabaya where he spoke about "the alliance between Turkey and the Soviet Union against Imperialism . . . [and] the importance in Indonesia of unity between Islam and Communism against our common enemy," which resulted in several unspecified "Islamic leaders" agreeing to attend the upcoming PKI congress of December 1921.[33] Tan Malaka used this congress as a platform to broadcast his message that Dutch imperialism remained hegemonic through the exercise of a policy of "divide and rule" between Muslims and Communists, arguing, "If we deepened and accentuated the divisions between Islam and Communism, we would only give our ever-watchful enemies the opportunity to exploit our internal hostilities and weaken the Indonesian nationalist movement."[34] Whether or not he was truly welcome in Sarekat Islam, Tan Malaka did clearly espouse a narrative of cooperation between the PKI and Sarekat Islam, partly because

[30] Tan Malaka, *From Jail to Jail*, 1:63.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Soewarsono, *Berbareng Bergerak* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2000), 80.
[33] Tan Malaka, *From Jail to Jail*, 1:67–68. The Indonesian attraction to Turkey was a long-standing one: Bermawy Latief reports that many households in West Sumatra kept portraits of the last effective Ottoman sultan, Abdul Hamid II, in their homes during the early twentieth century. See Bermawy Latief, "Putri Islam Bangun dan Bangkit," in *Peringatan 55 Tahun Diniyah Putri Padang Panjang* (Padang: Ghalia Indonesia, 1978), 222. For a broader perspective on the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Muslim communities in the Malay archipelago, see A. C. S. Peacock and Annabel the Gallop, eds., *From Anatolia to Aceh: Ottomans, Turks and Southeast Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[34] Tan Malaka, *From Jail to Jail*, 1:68.

he recognized their improved capacity for resisting colonial authority, and partly because they perceived the revolutionary potential of Sarekat Islam members.[35] Latent tensions were not easily resolved, but even so prominent religious figures such as Kyai Hadikusomo stepped forward to argue in favor of unity at the PKI congress on December 1921.[36]

This is not to suggest that there were no inherent tensions between Islam and Communism. Both Tjokroaminoto and his deputy, Haji Agus Salim, became members of the Volksraad, a partially elected advisory council to the Dutch governor general established in 1918, functioning as a kind of "loyalist opposition."[37] Sarekat Islam, partially as a result of its involvement in parliamentary-style politics in the Volksraad, came under increasing governmental pressure to rein in its "red" branches. This culminated in the 1923 decision to enforce party discipline and expel all PKI members from the ranks of Sarekat Islam unless they forsook their PKI membership.[38] Parts of the modernist Islamic movement, though tightly linked to the PKI in West Sumatra, and to a lesser degree, in Surakarta and Yogyakarta, eventually turned against the Communists. Muhammadiyah, the modernist Islamic mass organization founded in 1912, declared in 1924 that Islam and Communism were incompatible.[39] Even Tan Malaka acknowledged these tensions as early as 1921, the year of his meeting with Tjokroaminoto, yet conciliatory discourses concerning Islam and Communism still circulated and retained a powerful appeal beyond 1923. For example, the Mu'alimin movement, a *tabligh* movement whose foundation predated the establishment of PKI and Sarekat Rakyat branches in Surakarta, expanded through the 1920s and claimed several thousand members around Yogyakarta and Surakarta in 1926.[40] Adherents held private exegetical sessions where the Qur'an was interpreted through a Communist framework with little government interference.[41]

[35] Poeze, *Tan Malaka: Pergulatan Menuju Republik*, 302.

[36] Ibid., 69; McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 181.

[37] Only twenty of the Volksraad's sixty members were elected, by a very limited franchise of elite native males. Thirty were natives, while the other thirty delegates appointed by the governor general were (at least legally) European. The governor general was expected to consult the Volksraad on major legislative decisions but was at liberty to disregard their suggestions.

[38] McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 181.

[39] Ibid., 171.

[40] *Tabligh* refers to Islamic gatherings with the aim of spreading the message of Islam and promoting piety through scripture reading, discussion, *dhikr*, and other practices. See "Tabligh," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito. Oxford Islamic Studies Online, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2295 (accessed December 13, 2019).

[41] McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 171; Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 321.

Islamic Communist Newspapers throughout the Indies

I have written elsewhere of the varied conciliatory discourses that championed the compatibility of Islam and Marxism, particularly the books and newspapers published by Tan Malaka and the avowed Islamic Communist Haji Misbach.[42] Here I focus instead on a corpus of understudied regional newspapers throughout the Indies that mixed Islamic identity with Communist politics. Misbach was merely the best-known example of a much larger field of activists who were inspired by both Islam and Communism. In Purwokerto (Central Java), Langsa (Aceh), Sibolga (North Sumatra), Pontianak (Kalimantan), and Padang Panjang (West Sumatra) there existed significant strains of Islamic Communist discourses during the first half of the 1920s. There were even reports of a Perserikatan Komunis Islam (Islamic Communist Association) led by one Paiso in Makassar, Sulawesi.[43] Misbach's letters from exile suggest that his version of Islamic Communism was popular even in far-flung parts of the archipelago: one such letter mentioned his observations of sixteen ports his ship docked at en route to Manokwari. Misbach was welcomed in four ports by local Communists and observed the presence of local Communists in three others.[44] Interestingly, the four ports where Misbach was warmly welcomed were the Eastern Islands of Ambon, Makassar, Ternate, and Sanomo, all outside of the traditional strongholds of the PKI in Java and Sumatra. Misbach's claim is believable, since there is evidence of PKI and Sarekat Rakyat branches thriving as far afield as West Timor (until successfully suppressed in 1925) and the Sunda Islands, with the assistance of Haji Datuk Batuah and Nathar Zainuddin (see Figure 1.3).[45]

The producers and interlocuters of these discourses tended to be influential regionally rather than nationally, but their regional standing lasted well into the Indonesian Revolution despite long years of detention and exile. Newspapers like *Djago! Djago!* (Padang Panjang), published by Haji Datuk Batuah and Nathar Zainuddin, *Hindia Sepakat* (Sibolga), published

[42] Hongxuan Lin, "Sickle as Crescent: Islam and Communism in the Netherlands East Indies and Indonesia, 1915–27," *Studia Islamika* 25, no. 2 (2018): 309–50.

[43] Kankan Xie, "The Netherlands East Indies 1926 Communist Revolt Revisited: New Discoveries from Singapore's Digital Newspaper Archives," in *Chapters on Asia* (Singapore: National Library Board, 2014), 279.

[44] Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 284.

[45] Steven Farram, "Revolution, Religion and Magic: The PKI in West Timor, 1924–1966," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde* 158, no. 1 (2002): 23–25. Haji Datuk Batuah and Nathar Zainuddin were in penal exile from 1925 on the island of Adonora, before being moved to Boven Digoel in 1927; they remained active PKI propagandists even in exile.

by Xarim M. S. (aka Abdoe'l Xarim or Abdul Karim bin Moehamad Soetan), and *Oetoesan Ra'jat* (Langsa), published also by Xarim M. S., were linked to each other through the personal histories of their editorial staff, who were participants in networks of unionists, teachers and Islamic scholars spanning the length of Sumatra.[46] Not all of the newspapers examined here were connected so intimately, but there was a palpable sense of solidarity among many, and mutual recognition of each other's activism.

This sense of archipelagic solidarity was evident in the Purwokerto (Central Java) newspaper *Doenia Merdeka*, published by the local Sarekat Rakyat, a former Sarekat Islam branch that had sided with the PKI after the 1923 split. This was an explicitly Communist and openly didactic newspaper, with little space for advertisements, and aimed directly at the sugar plantation laborers of Purwokerto and Klaten. An advertisement from the January 15, 1924, issue called on readers to support the following newspapers: *Sinar Hindia* (Semarang), *Soeara Ra'jat* (Semarang), *Panggoegah* (Yogyakarta), *Pamor* (Yogyakarta), *Medan Moeslimin* (Solo), *Matahari* (Bandung), *Soeropati* (Sukabumi), *Sendjata Ra'jat* (Pekalongan), *Halilintar* (Pontianak), *Doenia Achirat* (Bukittinggi / Fort De Kock), *Terpedo* (Padang), *Djago! Djago!* (Padang Panjang), and *Pemandangan Islam* (Padang Panjang).[47] While these newspapers had various formal political allegiances and differing organizational structures, they shared a distinct openness to the conciliation of Islam and Communism. They were participants in the same discursive field, seeing each other as collaborators in a shared enterprise, and as interlocuters in an ongoing discussion. Given the geographic spread of these newspapers, it would be fair to infer that theirs was a discourse that had significant resonance throughout the Indies. This was especially true at a time when the boundaries between different strands of the pergerakan had not crystallized to the point of animosity, a time when the fluid field of nationalist politics

[46] Reid, *The Blood of the People*, 70–71. Xarim M. S. was born in 1900 or 1901, and began his career as a draftsman for the public works department (Burgerlijke Openbare Werken, BOW) in 1914. He went on to become the Lhoksomawae, Aceh branch chairman of the department's union (Vereeniging Inlandse Personeel BOW, VIPBOW), and a branch chairman for the pro-independence Naational Indische Partij (NIP). After the NIP was dissolved in May 1923, he joined the PKI and in 1924 rose to become the chairman of the PKI's Langsa branch and the PKI commissioner for Sumatra. See Horton, "History Unhinged," 13. Nathar Zainuddin was Xarim M. S.'s brother-in-law, a railway conductor from Aceh who was active in the VSTP. Expelled from Aceh in May 1923 after a VSTP strike, he became close to Haji Datuk Batuah and taught at the Sumatra Thawalib in Padang Panjang until arrested in November 1923.

[47] Advertisement, *Doenia Merdeka*, January 15, 1924. Many of the newspapers listed here were explicitly Islamic Communist, notably Haji Mibach's *Medan Moeslimin* and Nathar Zainuddin's *Djago! Djago!*

could contain many contesting visions of what the Indies should be without fracturing. Their writings were not representative of all pergerakan discourse, but these Islamic Communists were comfortably within the field of pergerakan activism and constituted a significant segment of it.

Doenia Merdeka proclaimed its alignment with Budi Utomo, Sarekat Islam, the Nationaal Indische Partij, and the PKI on the subject of democratizing education for the Indies masses. It explicitly identified these diverse political movements as working in solidarity to expand educational opportunities.[48] Some articles railed against capitalism, repeatedly stressing that "the outrages [perpetuated by capitalism] bring together various races and religions [in opposition]."[49] Its contributors articulated their opposition to capitalism in distinctly Islamic terms: references to *nafsu Kapitalisme* repeatedly cropped up in different issues.[50] This drew on specifically Islamic concepts like *hawa nafsu*, signifying carnal or base desires. *Nafsu* was widely understood to be the opposite of *akal*, signifying rationality, which with strongly associated with Islamic praxis. Other articles bemoaned the suffering and penury of the Indies proletariat (*kaoem proletar Hindia*), laying responsibility for their suffering squarely at the foot of capitalists, who were identified in distinctly Islamic terms: "Who has caused this suffering? None other than the aforementioned capitalists [*kaoem modal*], whom we can call visible devils, destroyers of the world . . . their origin is the Devil [*Sjaitan*] of capitalism, who satisfies his *hawa nafsu*."[51] The same article was also rich in distinctive terms that signify Islamic identity, with *Masa'Allah* (as God wills) and *Insja Allah* (God willing) scattered throughout the text.[52]

Other articles offered critiques of capitalism articulated within an Islamic worldview. "Si Pembunuh" (the murderer) was a sophisticated article revolving around an extended conceit, in which murder was a metaphor for the effects of capitalism. "Nafsu" was personified as a murderer (perhaps equivalent to the English term "Mammon") who "happily murders our brethren, merely for the sake of glorifying himself."[53] Moreover,

[48] S. A. (pseudonym), "Sampai Djemoe . . . Temtoe!," *Doenia Merdeka*, January 15, 1924.
[49] Anonymous, "Kemana Djalan Kita?," *Doenia Merdeka*, February 1, 1924.
[50] Ibid.; K. W. Soediono, "Doenia kapital," *Doenia Merdeka*, March 15, 1924.
[51] Soed (pseudonym), "Kjai Goenoeng Slamet keloehnja jang tiada dipoetoesan," *Doenia Merdeka*, February 15, 1924.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Mendoa, "Si Pemboenoeh," *Doenia Merdeka*, March 15, 1924.

> Nafsu's servants, the Devil and his demons, continuously tempt the people of God, true humanity [*oemat Toehan, manoesia sedjati*]. This wily Nafsu is not brave enough to murder in broad daylight, and instead murders subtly, such that the murdered do not even feel they have been killed . . . Nafsu's realm is expansive, and even the mightiest kings of the world are under his flag. Who is Nafsu? Verily, the kings of finance, the aforementioned capitalists.[54]

This evocative, and even poetic, characterization of capitalism and its workings evinced an analytical subtlety that suggested the author was familiar with Marx's critique of capital. The anonymous author articulated his opposition in a distinctly Islamic idiom: "A prophet said something in his book, which approximately means this: 'Not only people who separate the souls from the bodies of others are called murderers; but also people who eliminate the livelihoods of other people, who abolish their livelihoods, they should also be called murderers.'"[55] In keeping with the conceit, capitalism was identified as a subtle killer, with effects far beyond those immediately apparent.

The most explicit theorization of compatibility between Islam and Communism in *Doenia Merdeka* came from "Stupid Sri Jayabaya Prattles like a Madman." This article was written in response to another article published in a Sarekat Islam newspaper (the author of said article had taken the alias Sri Jayabaya, a twelfth-century Javanese king), which accused Communism of undermining Islam. *Doenia Merdeka* had this to say about Sri Jayabaya's arguments: "He claims that the PKI poisons the Islamic people's movement. Your [Sri Jayabaya] thinking is stupid, do you understand!"[56] The article also evinced the translocal perspective of a global Muslim ummah, locating the Indies within a broader world of Muslim Communists:

> In Constantinople, what religion do people profess there? Unlike you, they profess an Islam that is revolutionary! In Egypt, Communists who profess Islam are aplenty. In Bukhara, which is now governed by soviets, there exists popular Communist government, do you see? And what is their religion [in

[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Djoewardi, "Si Goblog Sri Djajabaja mengoetjeh seperti orang gila?," *Doenia Merdeka*, April 1, 1924.

> Bukhara] . . . ? In Persia, which already has populist government, what is their religion?[57]

The author probably lacked the information to accurately characterize these far-flung societies, but it does not alter the fact that Indies Islamic Communists saw themselves as part of a broader, global movement. This imagined vista of a world in flux, in which Islam could accommodate Communist ideology, did have corporeal manifestations in Iran, the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, and India, among other Islamicate societies. However, the article's significance lies in *Doenia Merdeka*'s simultaneous affective identification with the broader worlds of both Muslim and Communist solidarity. At this historical moment, it was truly possible to imagine oneself as both Muslim and Communist, as many others did throughout the Muslim world.

A monthly journal staffed by women and targeted at women, *Perempoean Bergerak*, provides another example of how Islam and Marxism were imbricated in the pergerakan discourse of this era. Under the editorship of Boetet Satidjah, and the supervisory editorship of Parada Harahap, an experienced publisher who had established multiple Bahasa Indonesia newspapers throughout Java, *Perempoean Bergerak* was a monthly journal that began publication in Medan in 1919 and remained in print until at least 1921. Its general sympathies were clear from the fact that it ran advertisements promoting newspapers like *Benih Mardeka*, an identifiably Islamic Communist newspaper from Medan to which Tan Malaka sometimes contributed articles.[58] It was not an explicitly political or didactic newspaper, focusing instead on stimulating and serving a growing female reading public, while also providing opportunities for women to work in journalism. Correspondingly, many of its articles dealt with issues like women's education and the norms of marriage. It did, however, embody a clear Islamic ethos: it held up the Prophet Muhammad and his daughter Fatima as worthy of emulation by female pergerakan activists.[59] Intriguingly, the same article went on to extol the bravery of Russian women, exhorting female pergerakan activists to support the pergerakan the way the Russian women supported the 1917

[57] Ibid. The Persian example is likely in reference to Mizra Kuchak Khan's Jangal Movement in Persia's Gilan province, which proclaimed and fought an insurgency to realize a Persian soviet socialist republic from 1914 to 1921. See Cosroe Chaqueri, *The Soviet Socialist Republic of Iran, 1920–21* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1994).

[58] Reid, *The Blood of the People*, 69–70. Parada Harahap also served as editor of *Benih Mardeka* for a time.

[59] Tk. A. S., "Pergerakan Kita," *Perempoean Bergerak*, May 15, 1920.

revolution.[60] The coexistence of Islamic identity and expressions of solidarity with the USSR were, in a sense, unremarkable for a newspaper of this era. Even for a newspaper that was not overtly political, it was uncontentious for such sentiments to cohabit.

Perempoean Bergerak also unambiguously proclaimed its commitment to both feminism and Islam. In its first issue, it announced that one of its aims was to advance native feminism (*feminism Inlander*), but was careful to state that "our feminism aims to follow the path of the beautiful and the clean, such that our pergerakan will not be hampered; we do not intend to transgress our beautiful customs and religion."[61] Another article entitled "Ajam Beranak Itik" (Chickens with Ducks for Children) carried the subtitle "Perempoean Hindia Djadi Njai" (The Women of the Indies Are Becoming Concubines).[62] This subtitle resonated with an anxiety over a perceived crisis of female sexual morality in capitalist societies, an anxiety that also inflected the writings of Communists like Darsono in this period, indicative of the Islamic moral framework they embraced. This article referenced "Allah" multiple times, and God's sovereignty over nature was extolled in verse.[63] Other articles, however, openly expressed solidarity with the Communist Sumatra Thawalib teacher (and later editor of *Djago! Djago!*) Haji Datuk Batuah.[64] Some articles even openly engaged with the PKI's flagship newspaper, *Sinar Hindia*, citing *Sinar Hindia* articles to condemn "sinful capital" (*kapitaal berdosa*) for "destroying the peace and ruining our freedom."[65] In a time when the desirability of women's education was still being widely debated across the vernacular press, the very existence of *Perempoean Bergerak* and its female staff writers was already a powerful statement, one that could be read as transgressive and un-Islamic. Even so, Islamic identity remained central to these journalists and influenced how they articulated their feminism, as well as their critiques of capitalism. For many women as well as men, Marxist ideas, feminist advocacy, and Islamic identity were inextricably bound together in their political activism.

[60] Ibid.
[61] Boetet Satidjah, "Salam jang pertama," *Perempoean Bergerak*, May 15, 1919.
[62] Endemic poverty often drove women to prostitution, especially in the coercive conditions of sugar and tobacco plantations. See Ann Laura Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870–1979* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985), 120, 215.
[63] Sitti Roekiah, "Ajam Beranak Itik," *Perempoean Bergerak*, May 15, 1919.
[64] Anonymous, "Bertanding," *Perempoean Bergerak*, June 16, 1919.
[65] Mariam, "Kawin Dengan Lain Bangsa," *Perempoean Bergerak*, December 16, 1919.

This mixing of Islamic identity and Marxist affiliation was also evident in regional newspapers like *Hindia Sepakat*. A biweekly newspaper published in Sibolga (North Sumatra), it was edited first by the Sarekat Islam activist Abdoelmanap, and then later by the Acehnese unionist and PKI member Xarim M. S.[66] *Hindia Sepakat* ran articles that indignantly condemned the arrest of the exiled PKI activist Darsono in Holland, after attending a Communist Party of Holland conference held in Groeningen.[67] It provided updates on both Sarekat Islam and PKI activists, like M. Samin and Alimin respectively, announcing their "leave of absence from the pergerakan" in early 1922.[68] Simultaneously, its ethos was distinctly Islamic. An editorial marking the occasion of the new year (1922) proclaimed, "All existence is descended from God [*Toehan Allah*]; perhaps the cause of God's wrath is the behavior of humanity, which increasingly engenders tyranny."[69] *Hindia Sepakat* made no secret of its affiliations: it celebrated the launching of other regional newspapers like *Soematra-Bergerak*, a weekly newspaper published in Padang from 1922 to 1923, which Jeffrey Hadler classifies as Islamic Communist.[70]

Further north, *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, edited by Xarim M. S., began publication in Langsa (Aceh) in January 1923. Its subtitle was *choeth'bah merdeka,* the "Sermon of Independence." *Choeth'bah* (*khutbah*) refers to the sermon traditionally preached at the communal Friday prayers, a partially political event because the sermon was regularly accompanied by prayers acknowledging the authority of the sovereign (in this context, Queen Wilhelmina). *Oetoesan Ra'jat*'s sermon was clearly not one of obedience to the colonial government. The editorial board proudly advertised their class status in its first issue: "This group of ours is poor and destitute, and far from wealthy [*beroeang*]."[71] It actively promoted Vereniging van Spoor-en Tramwegpersoneel (VSTP) political rallies, and provided extensive coverage of ongoing strikes.[72] Other

[66] Reid, *The Blood of the People*, 19, 70–71.
[67] Anonymous, "Tentang Darsono," *Hindia Sepakat*, January 3, 1922.
[68] H. S. S. Parpatieh, "Soematra . . . moelai melangkah menoedjoe apa jang dimaksoednja," *Hindia Sepakat*, January 5, 1922.
[69] Anonymous, "Perasaan, Pemandangan, Pertimbangan, dan Pengharapan 1921–1922," *Hindia Sepakat*, January 10, 1922.
[70] Anonymous, "Soematra Bergerak," *Hindia Sepakat*, January 17, 1922; Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, 181.
[71] M. S. Familie, "Pendahoeloean," *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, January 2, 1923.
[72] Anonymous, "Propaganda V.S.T.P," *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, January 2, 1923; Anonymous, "Openbare Vergadering V.S.T.P," *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, January 26, 1923. The VSTP (Federation of Rail and Tramway Personnel) was a union founded in Semarang in 1908, which had strong links to the ISDV/PKI from its inception. Key PKI leaders like Semaun began their careers as unionists in the VSTP.

articles didactically explained Marx's ideas, while Xarim M. S. himself occasionally published editorials critiquing capitalism.[73] For example, one of his front-page editorials argued that "the education common in Indonesia is based on capitalist characteristics that have penetrated out society over the last three hundred years, and has engendered a pedagogical language that is unproductive . . . [An appropriate] education should aspire to the following results: understanding one's people, loving one's homeland, and loving one's fellows, who are all God's creations [*sesama makloek Toehan Allah*]."[74] Consistently expressing itself in an Islamic idiom, *Oetoesan Ra'jat* began many of its articles with the formulaic Islamic greeting: *Assalamoealeikoem* (Peace be upon you).[75]

Other issues of *Oetoesan Ra'jat* explicitly glorified class struggle across the world, celebrating the successes of Kemalist Turkey, the Bolsheviks, and the Weimar Republic, yet articles also ended on the following note: "This world is truly convoluted, in accordance with God's judgment; those who were mighty may suddenly become lowly, those who were strong may become weak. . . . God's judgment is more just than worldly judgment, and whoever sins cannot escape from judgment."[76] In newspapers like these, Islamic Communists perceived a world pregnant with the possibility of radical change; they identified not just with their fellow Marxists or Muslims, but also with an imagined global progressive movement overthrowing autocracy and ending exploitation. Islamic Communists in the Indies understood themselves as part of this global movement, with cooperation possible between the various articulations of that movement, including between Muslims and Communists. This was not to last, but newspapers such as *Oetoesan Ra'jat* provide telling examples of the pergerakan's sense of an open-ended era on the precipice of change, where many things seemed possible. This zeitgeist was what Takashi Shiraishi identified as *zaman bergerak*, the sense of an "age in motion."[77] Closer to home, *Oetoesan Ra'jat* provided frequent updates on, and expressed sympathy for, the Muslim Communist Nathar Zainuddin, a VSTP unionist in Aceh who later became editor of *Pemandangan Islam* and *Djago! Djago!* (and who was also Xarim M. S.'s brother-in-law).[78] It also

[73] Aboelhajat, "Kemerdekaan!," *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, April 30, 1923; Anonymous, "Boenga Rampai," *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, April 30, 1923.
[74] Abdoe'lxarim M. S., "Matahari Terbit," *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, January 15, 1923.
[75] M. S. Familie, "Pendahoeloean," *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, January 2, 1923.
[76] Joenoes, "Keadaan Doenia," *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, January 26, 1923.
[77] Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 8.
[78] Anonymous, "V.S.T.P. Atjeh," *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, June 15, 1923.

carried advertisements for *Doenia Achirat* (Bukittinggi, West Sumatra), all of which signaled its belonging within a broader discursive field populated by various Islamic Communist newspapers.[79]

Finally, a brief glance at the Pontianak weekly newspaper *Halilintar* suffices to reveal its simultaneous engagement with both Islam and Communism. West Kalimantan, where Pontianak is located, is and was ethnically and linguistically diverse, even by Indonesian standards. Roughly split equally between Dayaks, Malays, and Chinese during the 1920s, it was perhaps unsurprising that hybrid discourses like Islamic Communism found niches in which to flourish. *Halilintar* began publication in 1922, under the auspices of the Pontianak's Sarekat Rakyat branch. Edited by one Djaja Pranata, its title meant "lightning" in Malay, while its subtitle was printed in English: "Our aim is equality of ownership of land," which it attributed to Sun Yat-sen.[80] The demographics of West Kalimantan may have partially accounted for the increased prominence of Sun, whose republican project was a cardinal reference point for the pergerakan in general, but who was especially beloved by the overseas Chinese. Nevertheless, it is revealing that the aspect of Sun's political thought *Halilintar* chose to highlight was land redistribution, a key policy of the Chinese Communist Party and the Guomindang's left wing.[81] Its simultaneous Communist affiliation and Islamic identity was evident in an article that openly refuted Muslim critics of Communism:

> Are there PSI [Partai Sarekat Islam] leaders who truly understand Communism's true goals? Why are they brave enough to blindly berate the Communist path? Is Communism incompatible with Islam? Does Communism teach bestiality? Communism is the path of *sama rata sama rasa* [same level, same feelings]. . . . Does Communism weaken the unity of Sarekat Islam? Is Communism a product of Moscow? Because of this, Communism has no place in the Indies? . . . This slander heaped on Communists serves only to throw dust in eyes of misguided people . . . have these reactionaries ever provided proof that Communism is against Islam? Have the Communists reviled Islam? Critiqued Islam? . . . No, Communism in both theory and practice seeks to create a humane world.[82]

[79] Advertisement, *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, May 31, 1923.
[80] *Halilintar* was titled *Halilintar-Hindia* in some issues. See *Halilintar*, December 17, 1924.
[81] Saich, *Finding Allies*, 99, 192.
[82] A. C. S., "Politiek Kaoem Kita," *Halilintar*, November 26, 1924.

Like its Javanese counterpart *Doenia Merdeka*, *Halilintar* was light on advertisements, explicitly Communist, and openly didactic. A 1924 article described the trials and tribulations faced by the Prophet Muhammad—to whom it applied the Javanese aristocratic honorific *kandjeng*—and his supporters in Mecca, which forced them to embark on the hijra to Medina. It held up the Prophet's unfailing faith in the face of said trials as an example for the pergerakan to follow, reminding readers that their "tribulations would be forgotten when they tasted the fruits of their labor."[83] The very same issue, however, also included a poem titled "The Fate of the Proletariat" (Nasib Kaoem Proletar). Tellingly, this poem opened with the following stanza:

> O Proletariat,
> Do not tremble in combating capitalism,
> Together we will hurl ourselves,
> Please subscribe to the newspaper Halilintar.[84]

This hybrid discourse yoking Islam and Communism to each other could be found even in a part of the NEI in which Islam was by no means dominant. Moreover, this was a hybrid discourse that was possible only because its proponents understood themselves to be part of something much broader and fundamentally adaptive: a global progressive people's movement that was open to embracing a range of novel ideas, as long as these ideas would undermine imperial rule and promote socioeconomic equality. They may have been naive with regards to the tensions that this hybridity would generate, but it is only with this mentality that Sun Yat-sen, the Prophet Muhammad, and proletarian poetry could discursively coexist.

Islamic Communism under a Microscope: *Djago! Djago!*

Of all the newspapers that can be characterized as Islamic Communist, *Djago! Djago!* exerted perhaps the most influence since it had a ready audience at hand. *Djago! Djago!* was based in Padang Panjang, the town that hosted the main Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah Islamic schools.[85] *Djago!*

[83] Tjakram, "Ketetapan Hati," *Halilintar*, December 17, 1924.
[84] Karpoes Merah (pseudonym), "Nasib Kaoem Proletar," *Halilintar*, December 17, 1924.
[85] Reid translates *Djago! Djago!* as "Champion," though other translations are certainly possible. *Djago* is literally translated as "cock," in the sense of the fighting bird. It is a word long associated with the *preman* element in society, which Anderson, Cribb, and Williams have described in detail.

Djago! was directly linked to the local Sarekat Rakyat branch, and widely read by students from the aforementioned schools.[86] The Sumatra Thawalib school of Padang Panjang was the oldest and largest of several schools within the Sumatra Thawalib network (spread out throughout West Sumatra and with a presence in North Sumatra), having originally evolved from the Surau Djembetan Besi (Iron Bridge School) in Padang Panjang. Audrey Kahin characterizes the Sumatra Thawalib schools as the most important West Sumatran educational institutions of the 1920s, with a total of thirty-nine schools and seventeen thousand students in 1928.[87] The Diniyyah schools were a related network of schools, also spread across West Sumatra, which specifically provided access to education for girls (both coeducational and otherwise). Both embraced a strong Islamic ethos, in the vein of *kaum muda* Islamic modernism. Both sought to provide a simultaneously Islamic and "secular" (i.e., European) education to a broader section of society than the exclusive government-funded schools would allow, an education that was not tainted by the ontological contortions of Dutch-medium education in the Indies. The publishers of *Djago! Djago!* and *Pemandangan Islam* were Nathar Zainuddin and Haji Datuk Batuah. They were PKI members, and both worked as teachers at the Sumatra Thawalib schools during the early 1920s.

Haji Datuk Batuah and Nathar Zainuddin were part of a broader social milieu that saw no contradiction between Islamic identity and Marxist critiques of colonialism. Other pious Minangkabau Muslims like Haji Bahauddin, husband to one of the founders of the Diniyyah schools, were reported to have made contact with the PKI in Semarang in 1921, though Haji Bahauddin did not formally join the party, as Haji Datuk Batuah had.[88] Instead, Haji Bahauddin remained a passive supporter of the PKI and a pious Muslim supporting modernist Islamic education, which suggests that the conciliation of Islam and Marxism in this period was not necessarily a matter

Standing at the intersection of mystical/religious knowledge, martial arts like *silat*, and local gangster/bandit, *djago* cut picaresque figures. They were by turns respected, feared, and sneered at; the impetuous *pemuda* of the Indonesian Revolution would be pejoratively described by republican statesmen like Sjahrir as *djago* on more than one occasion.

[86] Leon Salim, "Gerakan Pemuda / Kepanduan Sekitar Diniyah School," in *Peringatan 55 tahun Diniyah Putri Padang Panjang* (Padang: Ghalia Indonesia, 1978), 233.

[87] Abdullah, *Schools and Politics*, 61; Audrey Kahin, "Translator's Preface," in Leon Salim, *Prisoners at Kota Cane*, trans. Audrey R. Kahin (Jakarta: Equinox Publishing, 2010), 17.

[88] Latief, "Putri Islam Bangun dan Bangkit," 224. This recollection is remarkable, given that it was published during the height of Suharto's anti-Communist New Order regime. There was little to gain and much to lose from flaunting one's Communist credentials during this period.

of firm conviction and creative synergy; the two could simply coexist comfortably within the pre-1926 climate. It could also take more explicit forms. Bermawy Latief, an alumnus of the Diniyyah school at Padang Panjang, would later write that "the reality was that nearly all the alumni of the Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah schools entered the PKI and actively spread Communist ideology (which actually was revolutionary Islam in cloaked in Communism) [*sebenarnya asalah Islamisme revolusioner yang bermantel komunis*] relentlessly."[89]

While Marxist ideas were attractive to many staff and students in these schools, not all were comfortable with Marxism. Some, like the prominent Islamic scholar Djalaludin Thaib, chose to leave their teaching positions at both the Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah schools because of this, while others, like al-Azhar-educated Muchtar Luthfi, chose to continue teaching despite their opposition to Communism.[90] *Djago! Djago!* was associated with a social milieu of Islamic piety and progressive activism, a milieu that provided fertile ground for conciliations of Islam and Marxism even if not all were agreed on Marxism's utility. Some of the most radical students and teachers even organized an International Debating Club (IDC), which was undertook the day-to-day responsibilities of publishing of *Djago! Djago!*, enabling it to reach a large audience of students directly.

The Islamic tenor of *Djago! Djago!*'s content was evident from a weekly news summary entitled "The Whip of Fire," included in each issue. The articles in this section were very much part of the "wild literature" described by Farid and Razif, including such memorable lines as "The Communist movement has obtained the sympathy of the people of West Sumatra, and those who oppose it have to be content with their barking. These people, who have lost their reason [*kehilangan akal*] now want to form a local chapter of the PEB [Politiek Economische Bond], which stands for *Pendjilat Ekor Babi* [the lickers of pigs]! Here, they will mask their efforts in religion and custom. Beware!"[91] The same article also celebrated a suggestion mooted by the Department of Religious Affairs of West Sumatra that a tax be levied to support pilgrims making the hajj.[92] Even the insults deployed here had

[89] Ibid.

[90] Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 54–55. Muchtar Luthfi would later become a founder of Permi (Persatuan Muslim Indonesia, a socialist Muslim organization).

[91] Anonymous, "Tjemeti Api," *Djago! Djago!*, April 15, 1924. The PEB was a deeply conservative association founded by prominent European and Peranakan Chinese bustiness owners in 1919 to represent their interests in the Volksraad.

[92] Ibid.

a distinctly Islamic flavor: anti-Communists were described as barking like dogs and as licking pigs because both animals were believed to be ritually impure by Indies Muslims. The support for a hajj tax, however, was particularly revealing in relation to the priorities embraced by these self-declared Communists. Any political movement hoping to gain traction in West Sumatra would have to engage with Islam, and the Communists had no compunctions about doing so. It was their opponents, apparently, who had forsaken the God-given reason (*akal*) that was necessary for the orderly constitution of human society. Islamic Communists claimed for themselves the mantle of the true interpreters of Islam, even as their conservative Muslim opponents sought to do the same.

Djago! Djago! was steeped in the rhetoric of Islamic piety, but its sympathy for the PKI was obvious. The opening lines of the October 8, 1923, issue were "Give thanks to the mercy of God, cries all of nature." The same issue also defiantly proclaimed the poverty of the editorial staff, which is unsurprising given the newspaper's subtitle: "Newspaper of the Impoverished Masses" (Soerat Kabar Kaoem Melarat).[93] This was a newspaper that bemoaned the imprisonment of "our leaders," such as "Semaun, [Henk] Sneevliet, [Tan] Malaka, Mrs. Sneevliet, [W. A. van] Koordennoordt, Brandsteder, [Adolf] Baars, and [Harry] Dekker," the most prominent Communists of the 1920s.[94] The cardinal reference points for a future Indonesia, the dream of "our beloved people's movement" (*pergerakan rajat jang soetji*), are particularly revealing: they were to attain the same "level" as the peoples of Japan, Russia and Turkey.[95] Referencing the resurgent Kemalist Turkey that had replaced the Pan-Islamic dream of a revived caliphate (i.e., the Khilafat movement of the 1910s) alongside the newly secure Bolshevik Russia, the authors threw in Taisho-era Japan with its ostensibly westernizing, democratic direction, perhaps unaware of Japan's increasing suppression of Communists after the Toranomon incident of 1923.

This combination of reference points is suggestive and lends itself to several interpretations. One potential reading is that the authors were disinterested in the *ethici* promise of productive association and parochial tutelage; instead of looking to the labor and socialist movements in the Netherlands—in

[93] Familie I.D.C. (pseudonym), "Pendahoeloean," *Djago! Djago!*, October 8, 1923.

[94] Anonymous, "Tjermin Perbandingan," *Djago! Djago!*, October 30, 1923. See also McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 204. The (mostly Dutch) Communist leaders named here were imprisoned or expelled in 1923.

[95] Anonymous, "Tjermin Perbandingan," *Djago! Djago!*, October 30, 1923. This article also presents Turkey and Russia as countries worthy of emulation.

the form of the SDAP and its Indies-based affiliate—they envisioned a future Indonesia that forcibly asserted itself against imperial predations, as Japan and Turkey had done.[96] At the same time, this vision of Indonesia was also one that took inspiration from the brave new socialist world that the Bolsheviks were beginning to create, with its egalitarian rhetoric and promise of shared prosperity. That internationalist bent, an imagined place within the world of proletarian solidarity, was evident in statements such as this one: "Not only us, but thousands of others, have suffered, becoming victims, cannon fodder, for the war of 1914–18. The people's brethren [*saoedara-saoedara ra'jat*] in Germany, France, Belgium, Austria . . . left behind thousands of widows and orphans thanks to a few nobles and capitalists."[97]

At the same time, this was also a vision of Indonesia as one of many resurgent Muslim societies within a global ummah, shedding the legacy of colonial domination as Kemalist Turkey had done. These points of reference seem appropriate for an organization that called itself the International Debating Club. It was international not because its constituent members hailed from diverse countries, but because it sought to understand, situate, and process the rest of the world through its debates. This same article ended with a formulaic invocation that mirrored its opening lines: "Thanks be to the grace of God, cries all of nature; and blessings from God's Prophet."[98] Other articles in the same issue began with Islamic invocations like "**ASSALAMOE ALAIKOEM**" (peace be upon you), printed in bold in capital letters; Nathar Zainuddin also habitually signed off with the same phrase.[99] What made *Djago! Djago!* intriguing was how this Islamic identity coexisted alongside its proclamations of solidarity with Communist activists and nations.

Djago! Djago! served as a practical platform for mobilizing popular support and the dissemination of ideas. It both advertised and provided reportage of political rallies, particularly those with a leftist bent. For example, the unambiguously titled front-page article "Red Objectives" attempted to explain why various pergerakan mass rallies in Padang Panjang had so far failed to produce concrete results. Citing a recent rally chaired by Abdoel

[96] *Ethici* refers to the proponents of the Ethical Policy (1901–42), the peculiarly Dutch version of the European "civilizing mission," which optimistically envisioned improving the socioeconomic welfare of Indies natives through incremental reforms. In policy terms, this often manifested itself in terms of lowering the barriers to education or promoting a degree of—unthreatening—native political participation.

[97] Kwaw (pseudonym), "Kesoesahan Hidoep," *Djago! Djago!*, November 30, 1923.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Pengurus (administrator), "Pengharapan Pengurus," *Djago! Djago!*, October 8, 1923; N. Zainuddin, "Pertemoean," *Djago! Djago!*, October 8, 1923.

Moeis in which various people's associations and "red parties" (*partij partij merah*) were denied the right to speak, the author complained that "our Communist brothers" (*Saudara Communisten*) had been deliberately insulted and slandered by Abdoel Moeis. However, "Our Communist brothers remained patient in their belief that while Communism could be insulted, its truth could not be hindered, and its inexorable progress would continue with giant strides."[100] The author concluded that Abdoel Moeis, who was seeking election to the Volksraad at the time, had been parroting the same hollow arguments about the lowliness and weaknesses of the people for fifteen years but could not actually rebut the Communists' arguments against cooperation with the colonial state.[101] As a result, the disgruntled crowd left the rally and gathered at the IDC offices instead to discuss the value of noncooperation. The author, whose pseudonym Paloearit was a portmanteau of "hammer" and "sickle," reported that those who gathered at the IDC had their picture taken, with "the red flag aflutter between them, decorated with the hammer and sickle, the flag of unity between farmers and workers."[102]

This sympathy for Communism was echoed in *Djago! Djago!*'s coverage of a Sarekat Rakyat rally held in Padang Panjang on March 2, 1924, at which the "red partisans unfurled their flag, puffed up their chests, and searched for the salvation of the people."[103] Hyperbole aside, this dialectical "search" for a way forward for the putative Indonesia neatly encapsulates the pergerakan experience. In coming together both physically, at public rallies, and remotely, in the debates playing out across newspapers, putative Indonesians were groping their way toward an articulation of what an Indonesian future might look like, as well as what had to be done to facilitate the fulfillment of these visions. At this stage, these included visions of an Indonesia that was both Muslim and Communist. Tellingly, *Djago! Djago!* and similar newspapers loudly disavowed violence ("Does the PKI agree with the [anarchist] throwing of bombs? No! A thousand times no!"), though they eulogized Lenin when he died in 1924.[104] This conciliatory discourse linking Islam and Communism was a discourse that abetted self-discovery, of identification with a global

[100] Paloearit (pseudonym; lit. hammer and sickle), "Sasaran Merah," *Djago! Djago!*, November 10, 1923.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Verslaggever, "Openbare Protest Vergadering Sjarikat Ra'jat Padang Pandjang," *Djago! Djago!*, March 13, 1924.
[104] Indonesia (pseudonym), "Ahli Communisme—Atau Penghianatkah Ia?," *Djago! Djago!*, April 15, 1924.

movement. This in turn allowed pergerakan activists to sketch the contours of Indonesian-ness, beyond justifying violent acts of defiance or conspiracies to raise rebellion—although this could not be put off indefinitely. It was not a discourse that facilitated disciplined obedience to Moscow's directives or imposed ideological purity in accordance with Comintern dogma. Instead, what they "searched" for was a path forward: the conjuncture of Islam and Communism in the 1920s helped activists understand their present predicament, and suggested solutions in accord with Islamic values.

An article titled "Who Oppresses Us? Who Wrings Us? Who Destroys Our Religion?" from the final page of the October 8, 1923, issue deployed Marxist analytical frameworks alongside an image of Islam under siege. It opened with a rhetorical flourish that would not have been out of place in *The Communist Manifesto*: "This I know; capitalism destroys everything."[105] It went on to explain that capitalism was the "path" (*tjara*) of the present world, seeking to amass all the contents of the world and to eventually govern throughout the world.[106] The author went on to explain that capitalism was the unceasing search for profit, until all the wealth of the world had been exhausted, when said wealth would be accumulated (*bertoempoek-toempoek*, lit. piled up) in the hands of a few who would never be satisfied.[107] There was an appreciation for abstractions and systems in this article, but it also possessed a moral dimension: the author argued that this covetousness would ultimately "destroy the righteousness of humanity" (*membinasakan kebenaran manoesia*). Moreover, "The effects of capitalism . . . are purely destructive to our belief in the one true path, and contradict the tenets of Islam."[108] This was the Marxist critique of the pernicious effects of capital, but it was simultaneously a familiar religious precept regarding the corruptive effects of obsessing over material goods. Capitalism was presented as deleterious precisely because it legitimized the pursuit of material profit to the exclusion of all else; it was thus inimical to Islam. In fact, the author claimed, it was inimical to all religions, and it was the responsibility of the oppressed and poor—regardless of race and religion—to unite in seizing their rights in this world (not the next), because this world belonged not to the few but to all.[109]

[105] Z. (pseudonym), "Siapakah jang menindas kita? Siapakah jang memaras kita? Siapakah jang meroesakan agama kita?," *Djago! Djago!*, October 8, 1923.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.

This attentiveness both to the material world of the present and the spiritual hereafter was repeated in a later issue of *Djago! Djago!*, in which an upcoming meeting of the IDC was advertised. This meeting, it claimed, was for anyone who wanted a deeper understanding of "Worldly Knowledge, and Knowledge of the Hereafter" (*Ilmoe Doenia, dan Ilmoe Achirat*).[110] This was a discourse tethered to religion, but firmly grounded in the present reality of this world, not necessarily contingent upon rewards in the next. It was also a discourse with a distinctly international outlook, one that saw the people of the Indies (*Ra'jat Hindia*) as participants in the broader, global struggle. The article ended with an almost axiomatically Marxist invocation, much as other articles ended with Islamic invocations: "Arise you who are destitute! Destroy the capitalist scoundrels! Who else will?"[111]

The Marxist inspirations of *Djago! Djago!* were not limited to fiery rhetoric alone. *Djago! Djago!* was capable of deploying sophisticated analytical frameworks to explain the impact of capitalism in the Indies, remarkably well calibrated so as to be comprehensible to a wide audience. "Capitalists and the Proletariat" began with the usual fiery rhetoric: capitalists were people who sought profit even unto the exclusion of their own best interests; they were high-handed exploiters of the blood of the working class.[112] The author argued that the working class of the Indies lived in constant threat of retrenchment and with chronic depression of wages because of the colonial capitalist tactic of suppressing the purchasing price of Indies exports while maximizing the profits made by importers of European, American, and Japanese goods.[113] Presumably, this referred to the fixed prices for commodity crops imposed by the colonial government, the near-complete domination of Indies exports facilitated by the shipping monopoly of the Koninklijke Paketvaart-Maatschappij (Royal Packet Navigation Company), and the predominance of European businesses in the import/export sector.

Moreover, the author argued that the "obscene war of 1914–1918, which had obliterated twenty million souls," had been caused by the greed and wrath of the capitalists, because successful capitalists who had extracted what they could from captive markets now needed new markets. They were therefore forced to seize new markets, bringing European capital into conflict with American and Japanese capital.[114] The article went on to give specific figures

[110] Anonymous, "Tambah Madjoenja," *Djago! Djago!*, November 10, 1923.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Baharuddin Saleh, "Kapitalisten dan Kaoem Proletaar," *Djago! Djago!*, November 10, 1923.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.

for foreign capital "running amok" (*bersimaharajalelah*) in the Indies: f2.65 billion, spread across ten countries, dominated by the Netherlands (f1.9 billion), China (f250 million), and Britain (f300 million).[115] This "envious and treacherous" foreign capital, the author claimed, "undermined the prosperity of the Indies" through its domination of extractive industries like oil, silver, gold, coke, and sugar.[116] The formulation was simple, but its underlying logic was sound enough. Rather than a narrative of jingoistic conflict between nation-states, it identified the effects of capital when entwined with imperialism, facilitating and perpetuating colonial economic relationships, and locking countries into a pattern of competition that ultimately dragged the European powers into the conflagration of near-global war. This analysis was reminiscent of the arguments deployed by Lenin in *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917) or by Bukharin and Preobrazhensky in *The ABC of Communism* (1919), especially in relation to how monopolistic domination of captive colonial markets facilitated the outbreak of war between empires. It was particularly similar to Bukharin and Preobrazhensky's critique of the convergence of capital in monolithic monopolies/oligopolies:

> The fight between State capitalist trusts [monopolistic syndicates] expresses itself during "peace" time in the rivalry of armaments. Ultimately, it leads to devastating war. Thus, WHEREAS FINANCIAL CAPITAL PUTS AN END TO COMPETITION WITHIN INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES, in due course IT GIVES RISE TO A FIERCE AND EMBITTERED COMPETITION BETWEEN VARIOUS STATES. . . . the dominion of syndicates is inevitably associated with wars of conquest. Every robber capitalist State endeavours to extend its frontiers; the extension is demanded by the interests of the trust magnates, by the interests of financial capital.[117]

It is not clear whether Islamic Communists in the Indies had direct access to translations of Bukharin and Preobrazhensky's work at this early stage, but it would be fair to assume that many of the ideas being debated in Communist circles percolated to the Indies and were internalized insofar as they were relevant to the Indies.

[115] Ibid. The author does not cite his sources. "f" refers to the Dutch Gulden or Guilder (1435–2002), which had historically been used interchangeably with the Florentine florin, and thus retained the florin's currency sign of "f."

[116] Ibid.

[117] N. Bukharin and E. Preobrazhensky, *The ABC of Communism*, trans. Eden Paul and Cedar Paul (London: Communist Party of Great Britain, 1922), 102–5.

Contributors to *Djago! Djago!* often went beyond simply condemning exploitative capitalists, and identified an overarching system (the superstructure, in Gramscian terms) in which even ordinary folk were made complicit in and acquiescent to capital. "Why do we continue to work for the capitalists?. . . In this age of capital, we the people have already been educated in the precepts of capitalism [*dididik secara kemodalan*], which is to say we have been educated to become tools of capital, like living machines . . . the schools of the present produce mechanics, clerks and drivers, who are only tools. Now even the intelligent among us are conditioned to be tools, pursuing whatever will maximize their profit."[118] Evidently, the critiques of capital presented by *Djago! Djago!* were not simplistic (or that common euphemism, "messianic"), and resonated with arguments being deployed by Marxists in different parts of the world. These critiques, however, were often presented within an implicitly religious framework as well: "The never-ending exhaustion of the working class is met with the wage reductions by the ungodly [*doerhaka*] and unfeeling capitalists."[119] The solution to the problems posed by capitalism was "for the workers to unite, even those who were not in want, to marginalize capitalism by following the path of humanism: Islamism."[120]

Articles published in *Djago! Djago!* were generally well informed and plugged into contemporary debates surrounding colonial policy, one example being "Workers of the World, Unite Your Hearts!" from the October 20, 1923, issue of *Djago! Djago!* This was an exposition on the nature and purposes of colonial taxation. It explained at length the suffering of all natives (*boemipoetera*, lit. sons of the earth), from merchants to the very poorest, who struggled with their ever-increasing tax obligations. While accepting in principle the necessity of taxes, the author argued that taxes were ultimately meant to "regulate the welfare of the country," not a never-ending burden—which ranged from routine "corporate tax" and "land tax" to the ludicrous *hondenbelasting* (dog tax) or *Meubels belasting* (furniture tax)—imposed by the colonial state.[121] Moreover, the author pointed out that stamp duty cost between f1.5 and f3, while monthly wages were only between f2 and f5 for the common folk in normal professions.[122] With perceptible indignation, the author exclaimed: "Is there more? Yes, there is! If one applies to hold a public

[118] H. K. I., "Taktiknja si Kapitalisten," *Djago! Djago!*, November 30, 1923.
[119] Baharuddin Saleh, "Kapitalisten dan Kaoem Proletaar," *Djago! Djago!*, November 10, 1923.
[120] H. K. I., "Taktiknja si Kapitalisten," *Djago! Djago!*, November 30, 1923.
[121] Sadaroeddin, "Kaoem kerdja didoenia bersatoelah hati," *Djago! Djago!*, October 20, 1923.
[122] Ibid.

rally, one has to pay stamp duty for the permit. If the application is denied, the money is lost!"[123] That indignant rhetorical opening "Ada lagi??? Ja!" ("Is there more? Yes there is!") was repeated throughout the article, with the author citing everything from the stamp duty levied on the students of government schools in return for receiving their graduation certificates, to the proposal put before the Dutch House of Representatives (Tweede Kamer) to raise f300 million in taxes, partially from the Indies, to pay for an expansion of the Dutch navy.

This article was remarkably clear in showcasing everyday burdens in relation to the larger picture of colonial taxation policy. These taxes were being levied, the author claimed, despite the *doenia bezuiniging* (the world of austerity) in which the people of the Indies lived, even as public expenditure on pressing needs like healthcare and education was shrinking.[124] The article even cited a purportedly confidential telegram dated September 17, 1923, in which Queen Wilhemina instructed the Ministry of Finance to slash the wages of public servants and common workers by 20% for two years in order to save the exchequer f140 million.[125] Similarly, the April 15, 1924, issue of *Djago! Djago!* published a long list of salaries paid to civil servants of various ranks as of June 1923, totaling millions of guilders.[126] This was presumably an attempt to incite public outrage at the hefty wages paid to colonial administrators, funded by taxes on natives. These articles attest to the sophistication of the contributors and editors of *Djago! Djago!*; their writings cannot be dismissed as the syncretistic ramblings of an oddball branch of Islam.

Articles in *Djago! Djago!* also showed how pergerakan newspapers that favored conciliation between Islam and Communism were connected across the Indies. *Djago! Djago!* attracted donations from local towns in West Sumatra like Payakumbuh and Solok, but also from further afield, such as the city of Pontianak in Kalimantan.[127] "Workers of the world, unite your hearts!" cited articles on taxation previously published by *Sinar Hindia* and *Medan Moeslimin*.[128] *Sinar Hindia* was published in the VSTP stronghold of Semarang, and was closely associated with the PKI. *Medan Moeslimin* was published in Solo, in the Javanese interior saturated with sugarcane

[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Anonymous, "Ra'at Sepadoe," *Djago! Djago!*, April 15, 1924.
[127] Anonymous, "Terima Kasih," *Djago! Djago!*, April 4, 1924.
[128] Sadaroeddin, "Kaoem kerdja didoenia bersatoelah hati," *Djago! Djago!*, October 20, 1923.

plantations, and was the flagship newspaper of the Islamic Communist labor organizer Haji Misbach. Despite the geographical separation as well as divergent demographics (unlike the urban port city of Semarang, Padang Panjang was a relatively small inland town known primarily for Islamic educational institutions), Padang Panjang–based newspapers like *Djago! Djago!* were very much in dialogue with their contemporaries throughout the Indies. Other articles expressed solidarity with VSTP strikers in Aceh, while staff writers proudly proclaimed themselves to be readers of Semarang's *Sinar Hindia*.[129]

The editors of these newspapers were in direct contact with one another, and self-consciously proclaimed their solidarity. H. S. S. Parpatieh, who took over as editor of *Djago! Djago!* after Nathar Zainuddin was arrested in late 1923, contributed articles for *Doenia Achirat* of Bukittinggi (Fort de Kock).[130] The November 20, 1923, issue of *Djago! Djago!* even ran an article about a letter Haji Misbach sent to the staff of *Djago! Djago!*, detailing the assistant resident's search of *Medan Moeslimin*'s offices in Solo with forty-five policemen in tow.[131] "Waaah! After reading the letter, we were very shocked. Was there a need for the government to deploy forty-five policemen? Did the government think it was crushing a nest of bandits? . . . We freely admit that our office is in the same boat as *Medan Moeslimin*, because our brothers at *Medan Moeslimin* are in the same boat [*beronggok-onggok*] as us."[132]

Articles published in *Djago! Djago!* were often able to identify the intangible and subtle effects of capitalism, perceived and critiqued within an Islamic worldview. An article entitled "The Capitalist System [*stelsel kemodalan*] Dissolves the *Kebatinan* of the People" was a good example of how new knowledges like Marxist critiques of capitalism were mediated and translated through the medium of local cultures, cultures in which Islam was a core component.[133] *Kebatinan* is notoriously difficult to translate: it loosely means the interior core, essential self, or a person's source of spiritual strength. It had deep resonance in pre-Islamic Hindic culture, but also in Islamic Sufi spirituality, especially at a popular level. The article

[129] Anonymous, "Bendera Merah," *Djago! Djago!*, March 13, 1924.
[130] Anonymous, "Bendera Merah," *Djago! Djago!*, April 4, 1924.
[131] Arid Fadhilah, "Zooooo! Terlaloe!!!????," *Djago! Djago!*, November 20, 1923.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Soeradi E. S., "Stelsel Kemodalan Memboebarkan Kebatinan Ra'jat," *Djago! Djago!*, March 21, 1924. This process was evident in other Islamicate societies as well, notably the confluence of Marxism and Sufi worldviews in East Pakistan / Bangladesh. See Shozab Raza, "The Sufi and the Sickle: Theorizing Mystical Marxism in Rural Pakistan," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 64 (2022): 300–334.

condemned new additions to the penal code like article "161 *bis*," which it claimed would "attack and muzzle" people who dared to speak and write critically of the government.[134] It argued that not only was free speech under attack, but "schools that opened the minds of the people" were also being shut down by the government, rendering the people both "chaotic and ignorant," pitting themselves against each other in the labor marketplace.[135] These schools, it argued, included religious schools that empowered students to "progress and mature," and were essential for Indonesia (*jang paling perloe boeat Indonesia*).[136]

This was an objection to capitalism cast not merely in economic terms, although the article did wax lyrical about the suffering of smallholder farmers and merchants. Its objection was founded on the degenerative impact of an extractive economy that had no incentive to educate its workforce, miring them in ignorance and preventing their self-actualization. In Islamic terms, this was the triumph of *nafsu* over *akal*. Consonant with this framework, other articles published in *Djago! Djago!* described capitalism's drive to acquire new markets as the root of *nafsu Imperialistisch* and exhorted readers to crush *nafsu kapitalisme*.[137] The opponents of Communism were described as "lacking reason [*kehabisan akal*] and without shame, like people who have become animals."[138]

This critique of capitalism was based on the spiritual damage it inflicted on a person's inner self. The interior selves of the Indonesian people, their *kebatinan*, had to be nourished and defended too, not just their livelihoods. This was an example of what Dipesh Chakrabarty would have called "History 2": the interior, spiritual, and supernatural umwelt of Indonesians was an important part of their lived realities, and thus a motive force in history just as much as capital was.[139] This was not a rhetorical attempt to invoke a sacralized and idealized past, but rather an acknowledgment that Muslim societies were constantly in motion. They had to make provisions for progress and growth,

[134] Soeradi E. S., "Stelsel Kemodalan Memboebarkan Kebatinan Ra'jat." Article 161 *bis*, introduced on May 10, 1923, made the sheltering of strikers' families punishable. Article 161 *bis* was deliberately phrased broadly, imposing a fine of up to f10,000 or imprisonment of up to five years for facilitating strikes in any way. See McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 151.

[135] Soeradi E. S., "Stelsel Kemodalan Memboebarkan Kebatinan Ra'jat."

[136] Ibid.

[137] Bsa (pseudonym), "Koeboerlah Kapitalisme! Hidoeplah Communisme!," *Djago! Djago!*, April 4, 1924.

[138] Petir (pseudonym), "Pantjang barisan kita, tambah loeas tambah siap," *Djago! Djago!*, April 15, 1924.

[139] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 66–71.

both intellectual and spiritual, something that colonial capitalism certainly did not prioritize.

Similarly, articles published in *Djago! Djago!* tended to revolve around salvific themes. For example, "The Word of Our Adored Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him)" opened with a hadith (a saying ascribed to the Prophet) phonetically transliterated from Arabic into Bahasa Indonesia. The article went on to explain said hadith in simple terms: "Our Prophet said: no good will befall he who leaves the world for the sake of the hereafter, and the hereafter for the world, until he achieves both, for the world is the pathway to the hereafter."[140] This rejection of pietism was followed by a condemnation capitalism: "We lie in a world that is far from good . . . in this world of ours, the indubitable loss of our salvation will not benefit you gentlemen, you readers! Who is it that corrupts this world and ravages it? Of course, it is none other than the capitalists. If the capitalists continue to exist in this world, truly the world will be forever troubled."[141] Consonant with the hadith's emphasis on improving this world instead of awaiting the next, the author issued a striking call to action: "Now we must be ready, with no more interruptions, to overthrow these hellish folk [capitalists] so that we may obtain worldly merit, and so that we may attain the comfort of the hereafter in the future."[142] This was not a discourse of renunciation, of retreat from the material world to achieve gnosis with the Almighty, but rather predicating salvation on righteous action in this life. By linking overthrowing capitalism with Muhammad's instructions, the author firmly asserted that God required Muslims to eliminate injustice from human society.

Such salvific imagery was linked to the eschatological trope of the turning of an age, a break with the past that would see capitalism toppled:

> This present age (*zaman*) is utterly wrong . . . [This age of capital] is an age that exclusively privileges the needs of the few, and we must believe that out of the dissolution of capitalism there will arise a prosperous age of Communism. That is to say, an age of brotherhood, and age in which one does not only look out for his own needs, an age that does not distinguish on the basis of skin color or race, unlike the present, in which we hear of difficulties left and right, and inconceivable wickedness committed by

[140] Anonymous, "Sabda Djoendjoengan Kita Nabi Moehamad S.A.W.," *Djago! Djago!*, October 20, 1923. No source is provided for the hadith.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.

> the people day and night, when we are bound by the exclusive system of capitalism.[143]

Here the author utilized a notion of sequential epochs familiar to most Muslims: the advent of Islam, heralding the age of submission to God, had been preceded by the *jahiliyyah*, the age of ignorance. Squaring this with Marx's stageist conception of history, of the inexorable transition from capitalism to Communism, was not difficult, though the subtleties of dialectical materialism were omitted. Resonant though all this was with eschatological and millenarian folk beliefs, it should not be dismissed out of hand. The promised prosperous Communist future was not portrayed as a utopia that could be achieved simply through expulsion of the Dutch. It would be human effort exercised in solidarity, against racism and against individualistic self-aggrandizement, that would make this Communist future real—once people were free from a capitalist system that conditioned their behavior. This was a discourse concerned with systems, reform, and activism, but also with hope; "we must believe" suggests cautious optimism, not historical inevitability.

That is not to suggest that conciliation between Islam and Communism went unchallenged; the defensive tenor of some articles hints at significant opposition. An article from the April 4, 1924, issue of *Djago! Djago!* freely admitted that while Communism was superficially espoused by many pergerakan leaders, most of them were uninterested in applying Communist principles. Specifically, it accused them of failing to educate people to secure their political and economic rights.[144] It noted that an article from the November 20, 1920, issue of *Het Vrije Woord*, the Dutch-language PKI newspaper, had been commonly cited as evidence that Communism undermined Islam.[145] *Djago! Djago!* rejected this claim, arguing that "Communism has not even once undermined Islam; not only would this undermine the cause of independence embraced by Islamic groups, it was also prohibited by the tenets of Communism, because it would not count towards relieving the people of their suffering."[146] Such arguments illustrated the fundamentally adaptive character of Communism in the Indies, mediated as it was through local cultures and languages, formulating its own precepts in the process—even if they might not have sat well with contemporary European Marxists. The

[143] Kwaw (pseudonym), "Kesoesahan Hidoep," *Djago! Djago!*, November 20, 1923.
[144] M. R. Kasim, "Ra'jat Dibela Kedalam Kesesatan," *Djago! Djago!*, April 4, 1924.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Ibid.

validity of Communism as a means of achieving humane ends was contested from various angles, including accusations that Communism undermined Islam, but the defenders of compatibility were vocal in the 1920s.

The IDC itself, responsible for the publication of *Djago! Djago!*, merits some examination. Articles published in *Djago! Djago!* stated that the aim of the IDC was to "improve the fate of the youth of Padang Panjang . . . and the oppressed and impoverished masses, who did not yet understand the state of affairs of the present era," presumably through its pedagogical interventions.[147] The IDC's chairman was Nathar Zainuddin, who had been a tram conductor and VSTP unionist in Aceh until May 1923. Expelled from the Aceh VSTP after a strike, he subsequently returned to his native West Sumatra to teach at the Sumatra Thawalib school in Padang Panjang.[148] His close associate Haji Datuk Batuah served as the IDC's secretary.[149] Batuah was a long-serving teacher at the Sumatra Thawalib of Padang Panjang, having taught there under the supervision of his teacher Haji Rasul (a famous Minangkabau Islamic scholar and the father of Hamka) since 1915. Batuah himself was an Islamic scholar of serious standing, widely acknowledged as Haji Rasul's most able pupil, and had the benefit of both a Dutch elementary education and six years of education in Mecca.[150] His embrace of Communist ideas stemmed from the influence of Haji Misbach, whom Batuah had met in 1923 while on a tour of Java and Sumatra (the same tour on which he met Nathar Zainuddin).[151]

Djamaluddin Tamin, another of Haji Rasul's students, served as the IDC treasurer. He eventually joined the PKI in 1922.[152] Tamin would go on to become one of Tan Malaka's most loyal lieutenants, following him into exile, and would continue to espouse a version of Communism friendly to Islam. Batuah and Tamin collaborated not just in the IDC but also in publishing another Padang Panjang newspaper with strong Communist leanings, *Pemandangan Islam*.[153] These three individuals who ran the IDC were the

[147] Soeka Madjoe (pseudonym), "Padang Pandjang ada club baroe," *Djago! Djago!*, October 8, 1923.

[148] Reid, *The Blood of the People*, 70–71.

[149] Soeka Madjoe (pseudonym), "Padang Pandjang ada club baroe," *Djago! Djago!*, October 8, 1923.

[150] Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 39.

[151] Ibid.

[152] Soeka Madjoe (pseudonym), "Padang Pandjang ada club baroe," *Djago! Djago!*, October 8, 1923.

[153] *Pemandangan Islam* was substantially similar to *Djago! Djago!* in tenor. An example is an article authored by Djamaluddin Tamin: "From the perspective of Islam, Allah has envisaged all of us as equally noble, and is blind to race. In the words of Allah: certainly we have honored the Children of Adam, us and all humanity [Sura al-Isra, 70]." Capitalism was contemptible because it "deifies

nexus of Islamic Communist discourse in West Sumatra. Through their teaching and publishing, they sought to mobilize pergerakan activists and promulgate a vision of Islam that was deeply invested in social justice. The IDC also provided a forum for dialectical discussion of complex issues (what obligations were incumbent upon Muslims under colonial rule, for example), as well as an organizational platform for the convocation of mass rallies, the definitive instrument of pergerakan activism during the 1920s. An announcement exhorting readers of *Djago! Djago!* to join the IDC bears quoting at length: "When there are public meetings [*vergadering*] then even those who like to stay at home should consider attending, so that we may march in unison against the enemy. If all IDC members faithfully attend public meetings, it is certain that they will swiftly understand the torrent of unjust events that the destitute have been subject to. Take heed! Walk with the IDC."[154] The IDC was but one of many forms of association and mobilization that pergerakan activists used in their struggle against what they saw as the entwined evils of capitalism and colonialism.

The discursive impact of the IDC was not limited merely to West Sumatra. Articles in *Djago! Djago!* self-consciously proclaimed the IDC's solidarity with "brothers in Padang, Medan, Semarang and Aceh, who already understand Nathar Zainuddin's devotion to the destitute among them."[155] This supralocal identification with other areas in the archipelago was telling; this was an organization that saw itself as firmly embedded in a broader, Indies-wide movement. Padang, Medan, and Semarang were all urban areas with a significant degree of trade unionization, but Aceh was a larger, more diverse region. Aceh, Medan, and Padang were in Sumatra, but Semarang was a major port in Java, and a stronghold of both Sarekat Islam and Communist unions. The affective identification of the IDC with these areas was revealing because Medan, Semarang, and (to a lesser extent) Aceh were centers of union agitation, particularly the PKI-linked VSTP, but both Aceh and Padang were strongly associated with Islamic education and piety. The Acehnese were well known for the protracted *perang sabil* (holy war) they waged against the Dutch (1873–1904), while Padang was home to important

base desires [*bertoehan kepada hawa nafsu*], and armed with wealth and power, freely uses an iron hand against the poor and the working class, with no regard for the humanity of anyone besides the Capitalists themselves." See Djamaloedin Tamim, "Poetoes Esa," *Pemandangan Islam*, November 5, 1923.

[154] Pengoeroes (administrator), "Seroean!," *Djago! Djago!*, October 8, 1923.
[155] A. Fadlilah Hr, "Sepatah Kata," *Djago! Djago!*, October 8, 1923.

Islamic educational institutions such as the Abadiyah school (founded 1909), whose headmaster from 1933 onward, Abdullah, was a clandestine but active supporter of Tan Malaka.[156]

The IDC's affective links to these regions were mirrored by personal connections between activists: Xarim M. S. had been a childhood friend of Nathar Zainuddin's in Idi, eastern Aceh, and eventually became Nathar Zainuddin's brother-in-law. Active in the Vereeniging Inlandsch Personeel Burgerlijke Openbare Werken union of the Public Works Department of Lhokseumawe, Aceh, he transferred to Padang in 1920 and joined the PKI in Langsa (Aceh) in 1924. In the early 1920s, he published *Hindia Sepakat* in Sibolga (North Sumatra) and *Oetoesan Rajat* in Langsa (Aceh), both of which blended Islam and Communism.[157] Xarim M. S.'s commitment to Communist activism spanned decades: he would go on to become the chairman of the revived Sumatran PKI during the Indonesian Revolution, wielding significant influence (alongside Nathar Zainuddin) over irregular *pemuda* militia units, especially the socialist militia Pesindo.[158] Given the IDC's intra-archipelagic connections, it is difficult to dismiss its publications as localized oddities.

It would also be reductive to situate the IDC as a subsidiary organization of the PKI. Tan Malaka had contributed frequently to the pergerakan newspapers of Medan since the late 1910s but did not commit to joining either Sarekat Islam or the PKI before leaving East Sumatra for Java in June 1921.[159] His pre-1921 presence and post-1921 influence in West Sumatra does not suggest that the PKI was directing IDC efforts from afar. Djamaluddin Tamin himself did not join the PKI until 1922 and had already been teaching at the Padang Panjang Sumatra Thawalib for several years at that point.[160] If the IDC and its affiliated publications were simply parroting PKI propaganda, one would expect that there to be a more tangible connection between PKI headquarters in Java and activists either recruited in or sent to Sumatra. Islamic scholars teaching at modernist schools (like Djamaluddin Tamin and Haji Datuk Batuah, who found their own paths to Communism) were not particularly plausible as implanted PKI agents. Tan Malaka was the foremost leader of the PKI until his exile in 1925, a figure of significant

[156] Salim, *Prisoners at Kota Cane*, 19.
[157] Reid, *The Blood of the People*, 70–71.
[158] Ibid., 176, 185, 187. Pesindo stands for Pemuda Sosialis Indonesia, Indonesian Socialist Youth.
[159] Ibid., 70.
[160] Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 39.

stature even on the national stage, but it was not solely through him that discourses of compatibility between Islam and Communism developed in Sumatra. If anything, the social milieu in which Tan Malaka moved prior to his meteoric rise in the PKI may have been a formative experience. As early as 1920, Djamaluddin Tamin (then still a teacher at the Padang Panjang Sumatra Thawalib) reported discussion among Thawalib students of Marxist ideas, and the proposed creation of a Sarekat Merah (Red League), months before the formal establishment of the PKI in Semarang in May 1920.[161]

While Nathar Zainuddin, Haji Datuk Batuah, and Djamaluddin Tamin had PKI connections and eventually became PKI members, they were by no means the primary vectors of transmission of Marxist ideas to religious schools. The pace and content of discourses of compatibility were not dictated by the PKI, as if they were a cynical recruiting tactic dreamed up in Semarang or Batavia and imposed throughout the Indies. Rather, Marx's ideas were already being earnestly debated by students and teachers like Zainuddin Labai, a pupil of Haji Rasul's as well as a founding teacher of the Sumatra Thawalib, who never openly opposed Communist discourses circulating among his students even though he was not himself a Communist.[162]

Such discussions, playing out in newspapers, student associations, debating clubs, and public rallies, were part of a larger, ongoing effort across the pergerakan to combine ideas from Europe and the Indies. That meant thinking about where Islam's priorities lay, and whether those priorities could be reconciled with Marxist critiques of the profit motive, or discourses of universal human rights originating in eighteenth-century Europe. The religious preoccupations of newspapers like *Djago! Djago!* are too easily interpreted as evidence of "messianism." The historiography of Sarekat Islam is rife with characterizations of it as a predominantly "messianic" movement driven by the practices of secret fraternities, loyalty rites, and magical talismans (*jimat*) at the expense of "genuine" political organization.[163] Reading *Djago! Djago!* carefully forces us to question whether messianic or eschatological beliefs and political mobilization were mutually exclusive. If anything, such newspapers bring to mind E. P. Thompson's characterization of how the theological arguments between dissenting Protestant

[161] Djamaluddin Tamin, *Sedjarah PKI, Djilid 1* (typescript, n.d.), 65–66. Quoted in Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 38.

[162] Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 38.

[163] For example, see Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Protest Movements in Rural Java: A Study of Agrarian Unrest in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1973), 17.

denominations and the Anglican Church provided a discursive seed around which farmers' and laborers' opposition to capitalist exploitation could crystallize in eighteenth-century England.[164] In a similar vein, Chakrabarty's observations about the undervaluation of "History 2" compel us to consider how such movements might be framed as hybrid or creative, rather than pigeonholed as manifestations of a transitionary stage in the development of "real" political movements.[165]

The language, referents, and arguments deployed by the contributors to these newspapers were often nuanced, and it is important to keep in mind that the contributors were often well-educated men (Haji Datuk Batuah, for example, had six years of formal Islamic education in Mecca) writing primarily for an educated audience of both male and female students enrolled in the Islamic modernist Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah schools. These were schools that had, in rejecting government funding and modifying Dutch syllabi, already committed themselves in principle to forging a new pedagogical path. This path was fundamentally creative: it did not automatically take the European Enlightenment, or traditional Islamic rote-learning and hierarchical discipleship, as its starting point. The attempts of *Djago! Djago!*'s contributors to put Islam and Communism in dialogue were novel, but these efforts deserve to be examined as a form of genuine and creative political expression, no less legitimate a form of political activity than trade unionism or the pan-Islamic Khilafat movement.

The PKI and Islam: *Sinar Hindia* / *Api*

Naturally, the PKI itself recognized the benefits of conciliation with Islam. Indeed, so many of its most prominent members were themselves Muslim that it could hardly avoid engagement. The PKI's main press organ, *Sinar Hindia* (rebranded as *Api* after August 1, 1924), evinces sustained attempts to demonstrate how Islam and Communism were mutually reinforcing. Outside of newspapers, Tan Malaka authored several books and pamphlets that dealt directly with Islam or were framed in Islamic terms.[166] Many of the

[164] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 26–36.

[165] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 66.

[166] Lin, "Sickle as Crescent," 319–22. We may consider Tan Malaka extraneous to the central leadership of the PKI after his exile in early 1922, and particularly after his split with the central leadership

newspapers examined in the preceding sections were affiliated with the PKI, particularly those published by Sarekat Rakyat branches, but control over these far-flung branches was decentralized at the best of times. For example, the central PKI leadership sought to rein in Haji Misbach and his inflammatory newspapers on more than one occasion, but they were ultimately forced to acknowledge his de facto autonomy because of his popularity.[167] The central PKI leadership was Java-based, particularly in the port city of Semarang, where *Sinar Hindia* / *Api* was published. Alongside *Soeara Ra'jat*, *Sinar Hindia* was widely considered to be the most reflective of the central PKI leadership's views.[168]

By 1924, *Sinar Hindia* had been in publication for twenty-five years, including earlier incarnations *Sinar Djawa* and *Bintang Semarang*.[169] It was edited by the key PKI activists Mas Marco Kartodikromo, Semaun, and Darsono; Soebakat took over after the original editors were imprisoned and exiled.[170] The range and number of advertisements it carried suggests that *Sinar Hindia* was a commercially viable local newspaper with a wide readership. Its longevity was unusual for a pergerakan newspaper. It was less obviously didactic than many of the other newspapers examined in this chapter and seemed to cater to the local community needs in Semarang, although it was no less political for that. It also had broad circulation, as Rianne Subijanto shows:

> Although *Sinar Hindia* was initiated by an educated segment of both *priyayi* and *kromo* classes, it was by no means only distributed among the educated Indonesians. Given that by 1920 only between 4% and 12% of indigenous men and between 0.1% and 1.8% of indigenous women in Java could read and write, how did *Sinar Hindia*/*Api* manage to play an important role in a popular movement? The key was in the practices of public reading. *Sinar Hindia*/*Api* was not primarily consumed in private, but rather in public

over the wisdom of launching an uprising in 1926. He remained deeply influential even in exile, and was able to reinsert himself almost immediately into republican politics after Japan's surrender.

[167] Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 260–67.

[168] McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 178.

[169] The Semarang Sarekat Islam branch bought *Sinar Djawa* in 1918, and changed its name to *Sinar Hindia*. See Rangsang, "Samboetan Pada Perobahan Nama Orgaan Kita," *Api*, August 1, 1924.

[170] Mas Marco Kartodikromo was a pioneering Indonesian journalist and founding president of the Inlandsche Journalisten Bond (League of Native Journalists), who later became a prominent PKI organizer in Surakarta during the mid-1920s. In 1917, it was he who coined the slogan "sama rata sama rasa" (same level, same feelings) that would come to be the distinctive slogan of the PKI. See Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 88.

> events such as *openbare vergaderingen* (public meetings). Public reading, however, was not the invention of the early Communist movement, but rather a common practice at the time.[171]

Even though the split with Sarekat Islam had become definitive in 1923, *Sinar Hindia* remained openly supportive of Sarekat Islam, as well as of Islamic Communist newspapers. The January 2, 1924, issue of *Sinar Hindia* carried an article promoting the aforementioned *Doenia Merdeka* alongside several advertisements. These advertisements included one for a PKI pamphlet titled *Padoman* (lit. Compass), another advertising Sarekat Islam schools in Semarang, and a yet another (recurring) advertisement for a variety of Islamic Communist newspapers throughout the NEI, including *Oetoesan Hindia*, *Halilintar*, *Djago! Djago!*, and *Pemandangan Islam*.[172] The existence of these advertisements, even after the acrimonious split with Sarekat Islam, suggests that the PKI still saw itself as working toward the same goals as Sarekat Islam, as well as in solidarity with the explicit Islamic Communists. Recent disputes might have meant that direct cooperation was no longer possible, but the PKI clearly remained sympathetic to their stated aims.

Before 1923, *Sinar Hindia*'s engagement with Islam was even more unequivocal. In 1921, it republished articles from Haji Misbach's *Islam Bergerak*, including a rebuttal of the Muhammadiyah activist Haji Fachrodin's claim that Communism undermined Islam. This explicitly refuted Fachrodin's claim that Communism promoted ethnic chauvinism, undermined Islam, and sowed hatred between Muslims: "This *dakwah* [evangelistic propagandizing] against Communist groups is a clear mistake; Fachrodin, if you will recall, was once himself a member of the Communist ISDV, but he now attacks Communism. . . . Where is the sin? Communists do not mean to obstruct Sarekat Islam, nor do they seek to overthrow the religion of Islam."[173] In a similar vein, articles like "Keterangan" clarified the PKI's support for the Khilafat movement's pan-Islamism (as expressed by Tan Malaka at the fourth Comintern congress of 1922), while a series of front-page articles entitled "Komunisma dan Islamisma" by Darsono, published February 14–17, 1921, explicitly trumpeted the compatibility of Islam and Communism.[174]

[171] Subijanto, "Enlightenment and the Revolutionary Press in Colonial Indonesia," 1370.
[172] Anonymous, "Doenia Merdeka," *Sinar Hindia*, January 2, 1924.
[173] Arjo Troenodjoj, "Samboetan kepada s. Fachrodin," *Sinar Hindia*, February 3, 1921.
[174] Perserekatan Kommunist India, "Keterangan," *Sinar Hindia*, February 12, 1921.

The first installment of "Komunisma dan Islamisma" chided Fachrodin for his arrogance in presuming to understand Communism, and acting as if he were a qualified interpreter of it, when he only understood the basics.[175] Darsono pointed out that Fachrodin was not literate in Dutch, and no Communist source texts were available in Malay yet, so how then could Fachrodin possibly be qualified to opine on whether Communism was compatible with Islam?[176] Darsono went on to highlight arguments that had already been made in the Netherlands concerning the compatibility of Communism and Christianity, and referred Fachrodin to Enka's *Kan een Rechzinning Christen Socialist zijn* (Can an Orthodox Christian be a Socialist?); he also pointed out that there were many devout Muslims among his comrades in the PKI.[177] Rebutting Fachrodin's criticism that Communism would result in the loss of private property rights, Darsono expressed compatibility in the following terms: "The Qur'an mentions multiple times that it is only God [*Toehan Allah*] who owns all creation, but humanity may eke a living out of God's possessions, and the way in which humanity does so is not based on notions of 'yours' or 'mine.'"[178] That is to say, individual property rights were not paramount, because everything belonged to God anyway within an Islamic worldview. Unlike the explicit Islamic Communists, or Tjokroaminoto's conception of Islam as embodying socialism, Darsono's understanding of Islam's relationship with Communism centered on the absence of conflict. Rather than Islam containing within itself the principles or goals of Communism, Darsono championed the notion that Communism meant religion in general no harm, and that it might incidentally promote goals that religious people would find amenable. This was a theorization of compatibility, or perhaps a lack of incompatibility, but it was discernably different from the arguments deployed by *Djago! Djago!* and similar newspapers.

Even after 1923, *Sinar Hindia* continued to express solidarity with Islam in general, and Sarekat Islam in particular. Instead of condemning Sarekat Islam members as reactionaries, *Sinar Hindia* chided them for disregarding Islamic precepts. Like many of the openly Islamic Communist newspapers, *Sinar Hindia* continued to articulate key concepts in Islamic terms, such as by

[175] Darsono, "Komunisma dan Islamisma," *Sinar Hindia*, February 14, 1921.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid. Enka was the alias of A. van der Vlies, whose book was originally published by Baarn Hollandia Drukkerij in 1907.
[178] Ibid.

characterizing capitalism as a manifestation of *hawa nafsu*.[179] Additionally, it provided consistent reportage on Sarekat Islam congresses, both at a branch and national level, even publishing detailed conference schedules in advance.[180] It ran recurring advertisements for companies providing transportation for the hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, and even provided consistent coverage of Haji Misbach's situation in exile: the July 11, 1924, issue reported Misbach's request to be allowed to go into exile in Egypt.[181] This reportage appears to have exceeded expressions of solidarity or sympathy; the PKI central leadership, especially Darsono, did not get along particularly well with Misbach. The consistent coverage of Misbach suggested that Misbach's brand of Islamic Communism had significant traction even among *Sinar Hindia*'s readership. Indeed, as early 1921, Darsono had responded to criticism by the Sarekat Islam leader Haji Agus Salim by pointing out that many Communists were Muslims too: "Many of our brothers in Sarekat Islam circles possess deep faith; because of Salim's accusations, they have discarded their own reliable weapons, the religious Communists."[182]

It was not only male members of the PKI like Darsono whose writings mixed Islamic identity and Communist ideas. Women were often important contributors to this skein of pergerakan discourse. Unlike their male counterparts, women were often simultaneously sensitive to issues of both class and gender, speaking loudly in favor of women's rights, education for women, and women's participation in the pergerakan, even as they advocated social justice and exhorted their coreligionists to live up to Islamic ideals. Histories of the PKI are almost entirely dominated by the intellectual contributions and leadership of male activists. Men certainly outnumbered women, especially among the PKI leadership, but much of the party's rank and file as well as sympathizers would have been women; their voices deserve to be heard wherever possible.

Djoeinah, head of Sarekat Rakyat's Salatiga branch, was one such female contributor to *Sinar Hindia* and eventually became its first female editor.[183] She wrote regularly for the newspaper in the 1920s, and her articles often featured on the front page. Her articles contained unambiguous critiques of capitalism, arguing that capitalism enticed humanity to leave behind its

[179] Alhambra, "Kaoem Boeroeh dalam Doenia Kemodalan," *Sinar Hindia*, January 8, 1924.
[180] Anonymous, "Al-Islam Congres dan Congres C.S.I.," *Sinar Hindia*, January 8, 1924; Anonymous, "Kongres Central 'Serikat Islam' Djawa Barat," *Api*, January 5, 1926.
[181] "Pemberian Taoe Dari Kapal Islam," *Sinar Hindia*, March 7, 1924.
[182] Darsono, "Komunisma dan Islamisma," *Sinar Hindia*, February 17, 1921.
[183] Subijanto, "Enlightenment and the Revolutionary Press in Colonial Indonesia," 1365.

freedoms and pleasures in order to seek a profitable livelihood, ultimately causing many to fall into poverty and thereafter remain "bound by capital" (*terikat oleh kemodalan*).[184] Capitalism, she argued, planted the seeds of selfishness, wrath, and greed in human minds, ushering in an age of individualism (*zaman individualisme*).[185] This somewhat romantic invocation of an idyllic precapitalist peasantry was reminiscent of utopian socialism, but Djoeinah's critiques also evinced sensitivity to how capital operated. Djoeinah recognized that capital had already straddled the world for centuries, gathering strength all the while; she also argued that capital could only be resisted by prioritizing unity between workers and farmers, including both men and women.[186] She contended that the opponents of capitalism had to be willing to work with their erstwhile enemies, in the spirit of the common good.[187] While drawing on bucolic themes of a pristine, precapitalist age, Djoeinah's critique of capitalism was also measured and sober, acknowledging the difficulty of confronting capitalism as a system (as opposed to a cabal of exploitative capitalists), hence her call for sustained solidarity across class and gender boundaries.[188]

In other articles, a perceptible focus on women's issues was entwined with Djoeinah's critique of capitalism. She castigated capitalism for commodifying the bodies of working -class women, who were most at risk of being forced to become prostitutes to survive.[189] She also criticized the working conditions in factories and plantations that facilitated turning female employees into part-time prostitutes.[190] She called on educated women to go beyond contributing newspaper articles, exhorting them to organize and speak at political rallies.[191] Arguing that the people of the Indies were squeezed by capital (*tertjepit kemodalan*), yet had no weapons with which to fight it except their principles (*roekoen*) and inner strength (*tenaga*), Djoeinah called on educated women to add their abundant principles and inner strength to the struggle, or risk eventual dispossession of their lands and bodies.[192] She invoked the example of Korean nationalist women, who were willing to risk their lives supporting their male counterparts in demanding independence

[184] Djoeinah, "Zaman Ini," *Sinar Hindia*, December 7, 1920.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Djoeinah, "Belajar ta'mengasingkan diri!," *Sinar Hindia*, February 7, 1921.
[190] Ibid.
[191] Djoeinah, "Terhadap Kaoem Poetri Terpeladjar," *Sinar Hindia*, February 16, 1921.
[192] Ibid.

from Japan; to Djoeinah, this was an expression of international solidarity against imperialism entirely consistent with *Sinar Hindia*'s celebration of Kemalist Turkey and the USSR.[193]

Djoeinah's activism, however, was also couched within an Islamic worldview. In some articles, she explicitly expressed solidarity with Sarekat Islam.[194] Other articles began by giving thanks to God, then went on to identify Djoeinah and her readers as proletarians (*kaoem proletar*).[195] Capitalism was undesirable specifically because it was only concerned with maximizing profit, ignoring all cultural and religious values, making it the natural enemy of many. Therefore, she argued, the pergerakan had to open its doors to all potential allies, in order to "turn this age of suffering into an age of Communism."[196] Islamic values also inflected her worldview in more subtle ways. Speaking of the importance of women's education, she called education the "most important and noblest weapon of this age," which helped women get jobs and prevented them from being "easily led astray."[197] This last phrase was a euphemism tinged with anxieties about female sexual morality, echoed by her condemnation of abortion in the same article. While advocating the creation of more schools for women in Semarang, she also accepted "women's obligations, predetermined by God, to become mothers."[198] Moreover, Djoeinah proposed that women's education was necessary to improve household management and sanitation, as well as for the cultivation of children's "exterior well-being" and "interior well-being" (*kesehatan lahir* and *kesehatan batin*). She defined exterior well-being as children with "sound and healthy bodies, free of disease," and interior well-being as children with "intelligence and of sane mind."[199]

These were ultimately conservative attitudes that resonate with Partha Chatterjee's characterization of the Indian nationalist project's gendered dimensions, and the redefinition of motherhood in early twentieth-century Iran as described by Afsaneh Najmabadi.[200] Mothers were meant to be educators of the next generation, and therefore needed to be educated

[193] Ibid.
[194] Djoeinah, "Rintangan," *Sinar Hindia*, July 4, 1921.
[195] Djoeinah, "Bergeraklah!," *Sinar Hindia*, March 22, 1921.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Djoeinah, "Geraknja S.I. Perempoean Semarang," *Sinar Hindia*, December 20, 1920.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Ibid.
[200] Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, 126–27; Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Crafting an Educated Housewife in Iran," in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, ed. Lila Abu-Lughod (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 91–125.

themselves. As pure receptacles of the national essence, they had to transfer that unadulterated essence to their children, an essence embodied in notions of physical and mental completeness—hence the emphasis on *kesehatan* and not being "led astray." Djoeinah's acceptance of these gender roles did not in any way dilute the validity of her activism. Rather, it expressed how her advocacy of women's rights was (unsurprisingly) refracted through the social world she inhabited, a world that embraced particular gender roles for women. Operating in an Islamicate society in which women were prescribed clearly defined roles as nurturing mothers, Djoeinah redefined motherhood to suit her nationalist purposes but was not able to jettison her habitus and its assumptions. Even an avowed Communist and staunch women's rights activist such as Djoeinah, like virtually all of the pergerakan activists examined in this chapter, operated within a particular social context to which Islam was indispensable. Whether in critiquing capitalism or championing women's education, activists like Djoeinah conceptualized their activism within a worldview strongly influenced by Islam.

Just as men were not the only participants in pergerakan discussions, women's rights advocacy was not the preserve of female activists alone. Some PKI activists combined a concern for women's rights with class consciousness, embedding their arguments within an Islamic moral framework. PKI newspapers like *Api* regularly published feuilletons (serialized stories) on the exploitation of native women, such as Solikson's "The Story of Surya, a Man of Intellect," which explored oppressive gender roles burdening elite women.[201] Similarly, Djola-Djoli's "Siti Maryam," which ran from March 20 to May 12, 1925, explored the links between sexual exploitation, racism, and poverty for subaltern women.[202] Darsono himself, the *Sinar Hindia / Api* editor who authored the "Komunisma dan Islamisma" series of articles in 1921, was a consistent proponent of women's rights. He authored a series of three articles in January 1921 entitled "Kaoem Perempuan" (lit. women), in which he discussed capitalism's particular impact on women.[203] Darsono even embedded his advocacy for women's rights within his discussion of whether Islam and Communism were compatible. In one of the "Kommunisma dan Islamisma" articles, Darsono reacted to Haji Fachrodin's criticism that Communism would undermine the (presumably conjugal) rights of

[201] Foulcher, "Moving Pictures," 51–60. This particular feuilleton began publication on October 8, 1924.
[202] Ibid., 61–63.
[203] Darsono, "Kaoem Perempuan," *Sinar Hindia*, January 12, 17 and 31, 1921.

husbands over wives by refusing to delimit sexual relations. Darsono pointed out that if Fachrodin was so concerned about sexual mores, he ought to be concerned with the fact that unequal pay for women prompted destitute women to turn to prostitution.[204] This, according to Darsono, was because capitalism treated both women's labor and their sexuality as commodities (*barang dagangan*), analogous to coolie labor.[205] Paying women less than what men earned for the same labor was a well-attested practice on colonial plantations.[206] Darsono followed this up with a bitterly scathing accusation:

> Brother Fachrodin has certainly been to these hotels [where prostitution occurs] and knows very well what happens there. Are the women in these hotels not part of our society? Are they not the mothers of the people of the Indies? However, these women are said to have become bitches [*djalang*], and are no longer the honor of the Indies; they are instead called destroyers of the Indies. They have sold their bodies to men out of poverty, which could only have happened in this capitalist world. Who tells Brother Fachrodin that men no longer have power over women?[207]

This rebuttal was revealing in a variety of ways. It showed how Darsono's critique of capitalism was tied up with an awareness of the need to advance women's rights alongside class struggle. Simultaneously, it showed how Darsono operated within the prescribed gender roles of the nationalist project that Chatterjee describes; women were ideally avatars of national purity that should not be defiled. They were to be lionized as "mothers" (*ibu*) and pedestalized as the "honor" of the nation. While Darsono did not accept relegating women to the domestic sphere, as the prominence of female contributors to *Sinar Hindia* / *Api* attests, he did share certain assumptions with Haji Fachrodin. Capitalism was bad precisely because it facilitated immoral sexual behavior, something both he and Fachrodin could agree on. Communism, by creating a more just and equal society, would eliminate the poverty that compelled women to become prostitutes, and thus represented an improvement over the capitalist status quo in terms of safeguarding women's sexual morality. To Darsono, the commodification of women's bodies was not a female moral failing but the consequence of structural

[204] Darsono, "Kommunisma dan Islamisma," *Sinar Hindia*, February 15, 1921.
[205] Ibid.
[206] Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870–1979*, 120, 215.
[207] Darsono, "Kommunisma dan Islamisma," *Sinar Hindia*, February 15, 1921.

socioeconomic conditions, for which women should not be castigated. For both Fachrodin and Darsono, however, the maintenance of female sexual propriety was paramount, consistent with Islamic sexual mores. That said, Darsono did obviously evince sympathy for the plight of destitute women ("Are the women in these hotels not part of our society?") and a sensitivity toward how issues of class and gender were entwined, which was a rather more nuanced position than Fachrodin's anxieties over female sexual behavior.

This sensitivity to how class and gender intersected was also evident in Darsono's explicit support for gender equality: "Our aim is to equalize the rights of men and women. . . . We who seek freedom for all humanity are obliged to respect freedom for women, the mothers of the world."[208] He also called out double standards in gender roles, pointing out that Indies society found it acceptable for a sixty-year-old man to marry a seventeen-year-old woman, but not the other way around; Indies society also accepted a man's prerogative to break off romantic relationships at his pleasure, but not a woman's to do the same.[209] This, Darsono opined, was the consequence of a society in which women were economically dependent on men.

This article also showed how Darsono's discussion of class and gender took place within a broader framework to which Islam was essential. While agreeing with Fachrodin regarding God's sovereignty over all creation, he violently objected to the following postulate by Fachrodin: "Humanity is permitted to take anything in this world, on a first come, first served basis [*dengan djalan siapa tjepat dapat*]."[210] This postulate, Darsono argued, privileged the already wealthy and entrenched strife between humankind. The consequence of this postulate would be to make apostates out of the rich, which proved that Islam did not approve of *djalan siapa tjepat dapat*.[211] Darsono argued that if Fachrodin truly understood Communism, he would know that Communism, like Islam, was opposed to *djalan siapa tjepat dapat*. Instead, Communism "secures the fate of humanity in this material world, because it is only with their welfare secured that humanity can truly focus their actions and faith on God."[212] Darsono's unflinching discussion of women's rights was enmeshed within a broader critique of capitalism, a critique to which Islam was relevant. It was in Islamic terms that Communism

[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Ibid.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Ibid.

was justified; Communism was preferable to the status quo because it would improve women's living conditions of and facilitate Islamic praxis—including sexual propriety.

In the pages of *Sinar Hindia* / *Api*, PKI activists construed Communism as broadly ethical, and thus compatible with not just Islam but all religions, perhaps under the influence of theosophical ideas then in vogue.[213] However, they also accepted the intrinsic validity of religious beliefs, and occasionally spoke from a position of personal faith: "God brought Communism into this world, because *nafsu kapitalisme* was rampaging through this world. Communism has no direct connection with any religion, but its direction is consonant with all religions."[214] In the same vein, it argued that proletarian unity was paramount, and therefore no one religion could be prioritized over others:

> O reader, do not mistakenly suppose that Communists do not care about religion! No! In our struggle against the capitalists, we cannot afford to dwell on religion, which is to say we cannot side with any one religion. Communists may be a Christian or a Muslim in their personal capacity; indeed, at present many Christians and Muslims have become Communists.[215]

There were a number of factors that shaped this position. During the 1920s, key PKI activists still maintained close ties to Dutch ISDV activists who had mentored them, notably Henk Sneevliet and Adolf Baars. They also imagined themselves within a broader world of anti-imperial solidarity that transcended religion, as evinced by the frequent references to Kemalist Turkey, the Indian nationalist movement, and the Soviet Union in pergerakan newspapers, including *Sinar Hindia*. Their attitude toward religion therefore prioritized the principle of inclusion: in the spirit of international solidarity, it would not do to alienate old allies and potential recruits by insisting on the primacy of Islam. The NEI was undeniably multicultural, with significant plurality in religious praxis even among Muslims, so the PKI would best serve its own interests by championing inclusivity. Indeed, the tenor of the article seemed to have been determined partly by a perceived need

[213] Foulcher, "Moving Pictures," 39.
[214] Semaoen, "Komunisme dan Igama: Noot Redactie," *Sinar Hindia*, March 5, 1921.
[215] Sp. Hard. (pseudonym), "Kommunisma dan Igama," *Sinar Hindia, March 5, 1921*.

to show, first, that Communism was not entwined with or "contaminated" by Christianity, and, second, that Islam had no exclusive relationship with Communism. The repeated notion that Communists could not side with "any one religion" hints at the temptation to proclaim Islam's particular compatibility with Communism.

Overall, the PKI's engagement with Islam was broadly consonant with Tan Malaka's insistence on the distinction between public political allegiance and personal faith. At the same time, PKI activists frequently let slip postulates that accepted the primacy of religion even in realm of politics ("God brought Communism into this world"). These slips hint at the gravitational pull of Islam in an Indies context. For any political movement to operate productively in the NEI, especially one with the universal ambitions of the PKI, it would have to engage with Islam. The PKI activists who contributed to *Sinar Hindia* / *Api* had already squared their religious faith with their political activities. Even if they did not share Haji Misbach's convictions about Communism midwifing a truly Islamic society, their writings reveal strenuous efforts to conciliate Islam and Communism for their readers, much as they had already done in private. PKI activists like Djoeinah and Darsono articulated that conciliation in terms of a lack of conflict between political allegiance and personal faith, rather than in terms of Communism being instrumental to Islam.

Literary Traces: *Hikayat Kadirun* and *Studen Hijo*

So far, the sources examined have been mostly straightforwardly political, in the sense that they deal directly with lived realities and attempt to shift them in accordance with individuals' own political visions. However, a significant corpus of pergerakan print culture was fictitious, and political only in indirect ways. In this final section, I examine Semaun's *Hikayat Kadirun* (1920) and Mas Marco Kartodikromo's *Studen Hijo* (1919) in order to illuminate the broader social context in which Islam and Communism could be theorized as compatible. Put another way, this section seeks to explain the conditions of possibility for a phenomenon like Islamic Communism to exist. Institutional histories or biographies require monumental amounts of research but are conceptually clear-cut; they conceive of an identifiable, distinct subject and investigate accordingly. To capture a sense of the intellectual ferment, the zeitgeist of the NEI in the 1920s, is a trickier proposition.

Novels are particularly useful sources in this regard, especially since vernacular novels were themselves adaptations of European artistic forms, inherently outward-looking and cosmopolitan. Both novels were authored by Communists with unambiguously Islamic sensibilities, and they shed light on the pergerakan social milieu of the 1920s, a rich and tumultuous intellectual landscape that made combinations of Islam and Marxism possible.

Novels can be invaluable historical sources, as Hayden White argues, because they can reveal truths that historians struggle to articulate based on the "admissible evidence" available to them. White points out that historians are deeply concerned with both the "true" and the "real," but while the reality of the past is not in any doubt, the truths that can be told about the past by historians are circumscribed by obvious factors. A novel, especially one written by an observer who existed in the same time and space in which the novel is set, provides valuable "fictional truths" even if the novel is not strictly autobiographical.[216] White brings up Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* as an example, arguing that it constitutes a kind of "witness literature" or "*testimonio*" that provides important insights into the reality of 1920s London, even though it is not "true" by the standards of the historical discipline.[217] White makes a similar argument for Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz*, capturing realities that conventional historical sources struggle to convey.[218]

In line with White's observations, the novels examined in this section provide a kind of witness testimony, though not in the sense of an interview transcript or a diary entry. Refracted through the lens of artistic artifice, they are more seamless, more compelling, and neater than reality could possibly be. Nevertheless, such works of fiction are able to express many kinds of truths, including the range of emotions felt by participants at a mass rally, or the anguish endured by pergerakan activists as they felt torn between duty and conviction both professionally and personally. Such feelings are entirely real but can only be glimpsed in conventional historical sources. By examining novels, this chapter attempts to highlight particular kinds of truths about the pergerakan experience in this period, truths that likely facilitated the confluence of Islam and Communism in activists' political thinking.

[216] White, "Introduction," 147–48.
[217] Ibid., 148.
[218] Ibid., 149.

Semaun's *Hikayat Kadirun* (The Story of Kadirun, 1920) directly conflates Islam and Communism in various ways. This is unsurprising, since Semaun was an editor the PKI's *Sinar Hindia*. Written during Semaun's stint in jail from March to November 1919, *Hikayat Kadirun* was originally published in serialized form in *Sinar Hindia*. It was later published as a novel in 1920, with an estimated circulation of fifteen hundred copies.[219] Semaun's worldview was one that did not perceive Islam and Communism as inimical, tending to construct Communism as broadly ethical and therefore compatible with all religions, including Islam. As Henk Maier points out in his introduction to the 2014 Lontar edition of the novel, Semaun published an article in *Sinar Hindia* that celebrated his release from prison in a distinctly religious idiom: "Thanks to your prayers, comrades, I rejoice in the gift from God the Almighty, namely the gift of being allowed to perform asceticism in prison for a period of time. Verily, prison is a gift, a place where man can make plans for the general well-being of the world."[220] Semaoen clearly embraced an Islamic identity for himself, perceiving no contradictions between that identity and his political convictions.

In *Hikayat Kadirun*, Communism is introduced as a kind of *ilmu* that allows a suffering peasantry to comprehend the economic and social changes that have engulfed the NEI, making their lives harsher than before.[221] It is through understanding the global economic system of capitalism that they can make sense of their suffering, and then act to alleviate it. The protagonist, Kadirun, learns Communist precepts and thus achieves understanding of the world he inhabits through his didactic relationship with his mentor, the humble Communist activist Sariman.[222] This pedagogical relationship and its outcomes mirrors the relationship between *kyai* and *santri murid* (disciple) in the Javano-Islamic institution of the *pesantren*, the preeminent precolonial institution of both esoteric and scholarly learning.[223] Indeed, Kadirun's conversations with his Communist mentor Sariman often invoke God in the context of blessing their endeavors or making sense of their hardships, which reveals their untroubled Islamic identity.[224] There are other telling signs as

[219] H. M. J. Maier, "Introduction: Written in the Prison's Light," in Semaoen, *The Story of Kadirun*, ed. John H. McGlynn, trans. Ian Campbell et al. (Jakarta: Lontar, 2014), vii–xxxiii.
[220] Semaoen, "Ketemoe Lagi," *Sinar Hindia*, December 1, 1919.
[221] Semaoen, *The Story of Kadirun*, 54.
[222] Ibid., 132–58.
[223] The title *Kyai* refers to an Islamic religious teacher in Java, usually a member of a scholarly lineage and the head instructor of a *pesantren*, a traditional Islamic boarding school.
[224] Semaoen, *The Story of Kadirun*, 115.

well: the president of the local Communist Party chapter, who chairs the rally at which Kadirun first encounters Communist ideas, is a hajji—a pious Muslim who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Read carefully, novels like *Hikayat Kadirun* go beyond evidence of how Islam and Communism were imbricated and provide deeper insight into the zeitgeist of the 1920s.

Studen Hijo (A Student Named Hijo, 1919) and *Hikayat Kadirun* might be considered sister novels.[225] In *Hikayat Kadirun*, the protagonist begins from within the system—in this context, the *binnenlandsch bestuur* (native civil service)—as a well-meaning *ambtenaar* (civil servant) dedicated to the people's welfare but unable to perceive how best to realize it. In other words, Kadirun is caught in the *ethici* paradox. Bound by duty to uphold colonial rule, he must balance his duties against the impulse to actually better the lives of a colonized people. In *Studen Hijo*, the protagonist Hijo begins from without the system—the promising son of a merchant family, with enough noble connections to be respectable but not enough to secure lucrative government employment—and represents the quintessential constituent of Sarekat Islam. These were men who had established themselves financially and achieved some social standing through a profession outside of the civil service. Despite their disparate starting points on the social spectrum, both protagonists are inexorably drawn to a newly coalescing world of Indies politics, a world in which they find the solidarity, companionship, and wisdom necessary for them to transcend the impossible situations in which they find themselves.

For Kadirun, this means identifying a mentor, and gaining the knowledge that allows him to understand the limitations of working within the system, eventually leading him to embrace a (Communist) cause that provides him with inner peace despite his romantic frustrations. For Hijo, this means rejecting Dutch education and all that it entails: the embrace of Dutch manners, social norms, and Dutch romance. Political rallies, then a novel form of political association, are important in both novels. Kadirun attends a PKI rally and his worldview begins to change as a result. While Hijo does not attend the Sarekat Islam rally in Solo, this event proves to be pivotal as all the characters closest to him do so. It is the rally that provides the occasion for Hijo's friends to start unwinding the tangled skeins of their lives, an entanglement that frustrates Hijo's life in The Hague and prevents him from pursuing

[225] Semaoen, *The Story of Kadirun*; Marco Kartodikromo, *A Student Named Hijo*, trans. Paul Tickell (Jakarta: Lontar, 2015).

either romance or education. The Sarekat Islam rally and the PKI rally are two sides on the same coin; they constitute pivots upon which the life of each protagonist turns. At the PKI rally, Kadirun starts on a path that will eventually cause him to repudiate his career, wealth, and respectability in return for peace of mind. At the Sarekat Islam rally, the path is smoothed for Hijo's return to the Indies, facilitating a decision that he had already made to resolve his inner turmoil while "on retreat" in Amsterdam.

The PKI rally inaugurates the possibility of a new kind of world, the socialist utopia of Kadirun and his comrades, even as the Sarekat Islam rally marks the withdrawal from, or foreclosure of, the optimistic world of *ethici* "association."[226] Kadirun can no longer serve as an *ambtenaar*, for the structural limitations he labors under constrain his ambition to improve the lives of his fellows. He can, however, glimpse a new possibility for movement (*bergerak*), for action. Similarly, Hijo can no longer operate within the confines of the *ethici* dream; he finds himself torn between becoming Dutch and being Javanese, and he comes to feel his situation can only remedied by a firm choice in one direction or the other. He has to choose between full cultural assimilation or remaining Javanese, because the *ethici* goal of the enlightened native proves impossible for him. Remaining Javanese would mean rejecting the allure of Dutch education and a lucrative, prestigious career as an engineer, a modern profession for a modern age, opportunities that would only have been open to aristocratic scions not long ago. He chooses to return to Java. In both novels, the protagonists come to understand the frustrating impossibility of the positions they inhabit as children of both the Indies and of the Netherlands; straddling two incommensurate worlds, they cannot be at peace with themselves. They have to choose one world or the other, and both choose to reject the *ethici* fantasy of enlightened native. Kadirun glimpses something else possible beyond it, while Hijo's quitting the Netherlands is sufficient for him to preserve himself. In both novels, novel forms of political association like the mass rally provide the impetus for their decisive changes.

Studen Hijo provides a incisive depiction of the atmosphere and significance of Sarekat Islam activism, particularly its most visible and threatening activity, the mass rally. Unlike the *roman à thèse* that is *Hikayat Kadirun*, Marco does not dwell on the Sarekat Islam rally. Its atmosphere, nevertheless, is wonderfully encapsulated in the following sentences: "Aristocrats

[226] For the flailing hopes of *ethici* association, see Foulcher, "Moving Pictures," 38–41.

from the Solo palace, business people, government officials, private citizens were all there, and all showed a special warmth towards each other. Because of Sarekat's Islam influence, there was no distinction between classes. All were brothers, regardless of social rank . . . it was as if all the people of the Indies had gathered together and were heading towards a point of common humanity."[227] The Sarekat Islam rally signifies an act of confederation, a moment in which the rigid boundaries of Javanese society (reinforced by colonial race hierarchies and the co-optation of the Javanese nobility within the institutions of the colonial state) come loose, and an alternative community is envisioned, felt, glimpsed.

Gathering thirty thousand strong in a public space, new life is breathed into the Islamic ummah, united in the awareness of their "otherness" in the colonial Indies; the shared discontents that have brought them there are a platform on which they can stand together. In doing so, the ummah is made to feel tangible, corporeal. The rigid hierarchies of status and class that govern Javanese society are temporarily dissolved, or even incrementally weakened, through the shared experience of the rally. In describing this rally, Marco focuses on the sentiment of shared humanity, or essential fraternity; the attendees are converging on a "point of common humanity."[228] The suite of feelings that Marco describes seems authentic rather than pedantic, with little of the blatant didacticism that Semaun's PKI rally embodies, despite Marco's own affiliation with the PKI.

Without turning his novel into a platform for PKI propaganda, Marco captures, however impressionistically, a sense of Sarekat Islam's allure. The Sarekat Islam rally's unleashing of the sentiments of shared humanity gives us an imperfect taste (refracted through authorial prerogatives) of the flavor of the times, of how attendees might have been moved by their participation in such rallies. That sense of common humanity was perhaps exactly what the PKI sought to mobilize in its slogan *sama rata sama rasa*—same level, same feelings. It also hints at why the PKI found its symbiotic relationship with Sarekat Islam so congenial, a fruitful symbiosis that gave rise to a distinct Islamic-Communist strand of discourse. It was within such a milieu that Islamic identity, ethics, and values could blend with Marxist critiques of capital and empire in the 1920s.

[227] Kartodikromo, *A Student Named Hijo*, 83–84.
[228] Ibid.

Conclusion

The simultaneous pull of Islam and Marxism did not affect only the PKI or avowed Islamic Communists. Both Tjokroaminoto and Soekarno, the most influential pergerakan leaders of the 1920s and 1930s respectively, formulated their own approaches to reconciling Islam and Marxist ideas.[229] They were reacting to, or had no choice but to operate in, a political field whose parameters had partially been established by Islamic Communists. At a practical level, the popularity of Communism and the ubiquity of Islam was such that they had to engage with both or risk irrelevance. On top of that, explicit theorizations of Islam's compatibility with Communism had gained significant traction throughout the Indies, as shown above. This presented an opportunity as much as a challenge for synthesizers like Soekarno and Tjokroaminoto. To maintain and enlarge their political followings, they would have to be able to offer political visions that were competitive, especially in terms of socioeconomic equity. At the same time, they would have to carve out a political platform that would distinguish themselves from the various Communist factions in some way because of all the surveillance and suppression that the label Communist would entail. In that sense, both Islam and Marxism were deeply integrated into the pergerakan milieu of this period.

The point of this chapter has not merely been to present evidence to prove the existence of a phenomenon called Islamic Communism. Rather, it has been to show that there existed a variety of nuanced approaches to conciliating Islam and Marxist ideas. Moreover, it has shown that Islam and Marxism were deeply and perhaps even inextricably imbricated in pergerakan thought during the late 1910s and early 1920s. Even the most prominent and charismatic pergerakan activists were compelled to engage both in one way or another. This chapter has shown that the phenomenon of explicit Islamic Communism was discursively sophisticated, with significant appeal across a large geographic area. It cannot be conveniently dismissed as a millenarian or messianic aberration. This chapter has also explained how Islam and Marxism interacted in practice, in the context of violent anticolonial uprisings; highlighted the discursive underpinnings of this phenomenon in vernacular print culture; and attempted to remedy the

[229] Lin, "Sickle as Crescent," 335–41; Kevin Fogg, "Indonesian Islamic Socialism and Its South Asian Roots," *Modern Asian Studies* 53 (November 2019): 11.

lack of recognition of women's contributions to these discourses. Finally, it has explored the conditions of possibility for the conciliation of Islam and Marxism as expressed through fiction, sketching the zeitgeist of an era that made engagement between Muslims and Marxists possible and desirable in the first place.

Some of the activists examined here pragmatically recognized that putting Islam in dialogue with Communism was politically fruitful. For others, Communism appeared to be the best vehicle for fulfilling their religious obligations to create and maintain an equitable society. For yet others, personal faith and political ideology were perceived as existing in distinct, incommensurate realms, and thus noncontradictory. While countervailing forces did exist, Islam and Marxism proved a potent combination when invoked in opposition to the colonial state during the pre-1926 period.

Conciliations of Islam and Marxism took on subtler forms after the 1926–27 uprisings, after violent revolution failed and colonial repression intensified. Denied the freedom to publish freely during the 1930s and with even non-Communist organized labor actively suppressed after 1933, the scope of action hitherto enjoyed by explicit Islamic Communists and the producers of "wild literature" became seriously circumscribed.[230] A younger generation of pergerakan activists found other ways of making their voices heard. After 1927, newspapers continued to be an important means of circulating and debating pergerakan ideas, but other organizations such as study clubs and women's rights organizations became increasingly prominent where overtly political organizations and labor unions had been stymied. It is to these alternative forms of "movement" that the next chapter turns.

[230] Ingleson, *Workers, Unions and Politics*, 201–64.

2

New Modes of Movement

The post-1927 climate of political repression circumscribed the space in which the pergerakan could maneuver. Accordingly, some sought new modes of organization that did not involve unions, strikes, propagandizing, and clandestine organizations, while others took the opportunity (especially those in enforced exile) to reflect and consider how the pergerakan might make progress toward the goal of independence under these new constraints. This chapter will explore the discursive output of the pergerakan during a period in which mass rallies were rare, strikes were no longer possible, and schools were coming under increasing government scrutiny. Unsurprisingly, despite increasingly strict censorship, pergerakan activists turned to the comparatively innocuous medium of print to express themselves and generate support for their ideas, which makes print sources particularly valuable for this period.

Their writings evinced a mix of attachment to Islamic identity and openness to "translating" the intellectual innovations of Europe as well as learning from the experiences of other Asian societies, knowledge that often included Marxist ideas. For example, Sutan Sjahrir and Mohammad Hatta's Pendidikan movement incubated many future republicans, and its newspapers perceived no contradiction in embracing Islamic identity while also translating and writing commentaries on segments of Marx's *Das Kapital*.[1] Outside of the future republic's most prominent and Java-based leaders, however, discursive confluences of Islam and Marxism were also articulated. This was especially evident among the Minangkabau of West Sumatra, including the Minangkabau diaspora spread across the archipelago. This chapter therefore pays particular attention to West Sumatra and the Minangkabau diaspora.

[1] Lin Hongxuan, "One Eye in the Chain of the Asian Movement: Muslims Adapting Marx in the Netherlands East Indies, 1927–1942," in *Experiments with Marxism-Leninism in Cold War Southeast Asia*, ed. Matthew Galway and Marc Opper (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2022). For an example of Pendidikan commentaries on Marx, see Soewardi, "Peladjaran Karl Marx," *Banteng Ra'jat*, April 25, 1932; *Das Kapital* was translated and serialized in *Daulat Ra'jat* from the April 20, 1933 issue onward.

Ummah Yet Proletariat. Lin Hongxuan, Oxford University Press. © Oxford University Press 2023.
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Taking a detour from the usual Java-centric approach to Indonesian history, this chapter begins from the periphery (West Sumatra and numerous regional activists) and meanders back to the center (Java and Soekarno) of pergerakan activism. By first examining how local dynamics shaped pergerakan discourse in one geographic and cultural zone, this chapter attempts to present an in-depth account of how Islam and Marxism could be entwined in the motivations and inspirations of pergerakan activists. Taking inspiration from John Smail's study of Bandung from 1945 to 1950, a city "peripheral" to the revolution when compared to Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and Surabaya, this chapter's emphasis on West Sumatra and the Minangkabau diaspora illustrates one instance of confluence between Islam and Marxism in detail instead of sampling tidbits of evidence from across the archipelago.[2] What happened in West Sumatra certainly had cognates in other parts of the archipelago, but the Minangkabau were disproportionately influential in setting the tenor of pergerakan discourse between 1927 and 1942, making them a good entry point for a study of pergerakan ideas during this period.

Minangkabau activists played an important role in the struggle for Indonesian independence and were overrepresented at the highest levels of the pergerakan leadership.[3] This was especially true from the 1930s onward, and Minangkabau activists became particularly important both during the revolution and in the early republic. One could even characterize the 1930s, the revolution, and the parliamentary democracy period as a sustained moment of Minangkabau prominence. Such figures of national importance as Mohammad Hatta, Sutan Sjahrir, Mohammed Natsir, Abu Hanifah, and Sjafruddin Prawiranegara were all Minangkabau (though Prawiranegara only partially so), and their writings are examined in the next few chapters. The matrilineal organization, democratic traditions (centered around villages and kinship groups known as *nagari*), and culture of peripatetic rites of passage for men (*rantau*) of the Minangkabau have been ably and

[2] John Smail, *Bandung in the Early Revolution, 1945–46* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1964).

[3] Where appropriate, the terms "Indonesia" and "Indonesian" are used from this chapter onward instead of "Indies," since the cultivation of an "Indonesian" identity and the creation of a polity called "Indonesia" (or at least its outlines) had coalesced as primary pergerakan goals by 1928. The term "Indonesia" was explicitly used in the Second Youth Congress held in Batavia in October 1928, and included in the famous nationalist pledge, the *sumpah pemdua* (youth pledge), that emerged from that conference. The concept of Indonesia had existed before 1928, but in existed in competition with other imagined communities like the Pan-Islamic polity conceived by the Khilafat movement. It was during the 1927–41 period that the pergerakan committed to the concept of Indonesia as an imagined successor, and imagined precursor, to the geo-body of the Netherlands East Indies.

eloquently analyzed by Jeffrey Hadler, Taufik Abdullah, and Rudolf Mrázek.[4] For our present purposes, it suffices to point out that Minangkabau society produced a number of key pergerakan leaders and organizations that seemed particularly open to conciliating Islamic identity and Marxist ideas, perhaps because both Islamic identity and ideals of social justice possessed particular resonance in Minangkabau society.

This chapter starts by scrutinizing two prominent pergerakan organizations of the 1930s, the Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia (PSII, Islamic League Party of Indonesia) and Persatuan Muslim Indonesia (Permi, Union of Indonesian Muslims), both of which were especially popular in West Sumatra.[5] The discursive output of these organizations readily invoked both Islamic identity and socialist ideas, and female activists from both parties were prominent producers of such discourse. This is followed by an examination of the Dinyyah schools of West Sumatra, partial heirs to Sumatra Thawalib's radicalism. Drifting back to Java, this chapter considers how Islamic identity and Marxist ideas coexisted among the Dutch-educated literati of the 1930s, specifically those associated with the left-leaning avant-garde journal *Kritiek en Opbouw* (Criticism and Construction), including many prominent female writers. Next come two novels that shed light on the ideas circulating in pergerakan schools in this period: the pioneering female novelist Soewarsih Djojopoespito's *Buiten het Gareel* (1940), and the Minangkabau Islamic Communist Xarim M. S.'s *Hadji Dadjal* (1941). Finally, this chapter considers Soekarno's relationship with Islam during the 1930s, showing how his understanding of Islam deepened during exile, allowing him to incorporate Islam more deeply into his synthesis of nationalism, Islam and Communism.

Surveying these developments, it becomes clear that the explicit theorizations of compatibility between Islam and Communism that had been commonplace in the pre-1927 period became increasingly untenable. Pergerakan activists of the 1930s turned away from Soviet-led Communism, engaging instead with a broader corpus of socialist ideas emanating from Europe, by reading commentaries such as Sidney Hook's *Toward an Understanding of Karl Marx* (1933) and H. P. G. Quack's *De Socialisten*

[4] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*; Abdullah, *Schools and Politics*; Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*.

[5] Alongside Soekarno's Partindo and Sjahrir and Hatta's Pendidikan, PSII and Permi were perceived by the colonial state as the most dangerous nationalist organizations. The resident of West Sumatra and the attorney general recommended the suppression of all four in July 1933. See Shiraishi, *The Phantom World of Digul*, 229–30.

(1877–97, 3 vols.). They also read the works of P. J. Troelstra, Otto Bauer, and Jean Juarès.[6] This did not preclude direct engagement with Marx's own writings—Sjahrir and Hatta's Pendidikan newspapers openly did so—but the emphasis shifted to workers' cooperatives, pedagogical efforts, and women's rights activism, instead of the pre-1927 focus on mass rallies, union organizing, and strikes. Throughout it all, many pergerakan activists never lost, or even questioned, their Islamic faith.[7]

Pergerakan Print Culture in the 1930s

The suppression of the PKI in 1927 signaled a turn toward stricter press and censorship laws, with freedom of assembly for political purposes severely curtailed. In the discursive realm, this took the form of the *persbreidel* (press-curbing ordinance) of 1931, which empowered the governor general to prohibit publication of any periodical for an unspecific period of time, as opposed to charges of *persdelict*, which were "press offenses" under the NEI penal code.[8] These new restrictions did curtail the vitality of the pergerakan, whose members could no longer count on the opportunity to voice their frustrations in newspapers, or on the stage at mass rallies, as they had done in the 1920s. However, as Yamamoto Nobuto argues, these restrictions resulted in an intensification of effort in vernacular print culture, which flourished during the early 1930s.[9]

Many 1930s newspapers had short print runs due to financial troubles and censorship, but they were legion, and their sheer diversity ensures that they remain understudied. One 1971 index of Indonesian newspapers lists over one thousand newspapers published across fifty-five cities throughout the archipelago, the majority of which began publication during the colonial period.[10] Moreover, despite limited circulation and the low literacy of the general population, such newspapers often had a surprisingly wide reach, as literate subscribers would often read aloud to friends and family before

[6] J. D. Legge, *Intellectuals and Nationalism in Indonesia: A Study of the Following Recruited by Sutan Sjahrir in Occupation Jakarta* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1988), 119–23. This was especially true of Pendidikan members, and more broadly of those who had access to Dutch education.

[7] Ibid., 32, 44, 101.

[8] Yamamoto, "The Dynamics of Contentious Politics in the Indies," 5.

[9] Yamamoto, "Print Power and Censorship in Colonial Indonesia, 1914–1942."

[10] Nunn, *Indonesian Newspapers*.

passing on the newspaper to another literate person.[11] This prolonged the afterlives of newspapers, their contents reverberating through communities weeks after the initial publication, and helped circulate pergerakan ideas in a largely illiterate agricultural society.

This post-1927 generation of the pergerakan, activists who had newly come of age or barely escaped banishment or imprisonment, was mindful of the costs of premature revolt. Besides publishing, they channeled their efforts into the creation of study circles (the Pendidikan), social clubs (alumni clubs), student organizations (the Diniyyah student union, scouting organizations like El Hilaal), noncooperative political parties (PSII), and semipolitical organizations (Permi) that would serve the pedagogic function of preparing Indonesians for eventual independence.[12] Moreover, because the Dutch *ethici* had not yet fully abandoned the civilizing mission they had embraced earlier in the century, pergerakan print culture remained relatively prolific despite censorship. The newspapers most closely associated with PKI bore the brunt of censorship, but even obviously socialist Pendidikan newspapers like *Kedaulatan Ra'jat* (The Sovereignty of the People) continued to be published through most of the 1930s; it ran from 1931 to 1938, though with many gaps between issues.[13]

The strongly pedagogical character of pergerakan activism in both publishing and organizing during the 1930s requires some contextualization. In *The Rope of God*, James Siegel argued that an Islamic society was understood by the Acehnese to mean a commonwealth of Muslims in free association with one another, rendering them more than the sum of their cultural attachments and local allegiances.[14] The signifier "Islam" represented the triumph of *akal* (reason) over *nafsu* (desire), and an Islamic society was one capable of competing with the model offered by the Dutch because a society peopled by pious Muslims was a society constituted by rational actors. It was such rational actors—a concept perfectly compatible with being Muslim—that the pergerakan of the 1930s sought to cultivate through education. Whether it was urban study clubs that gave rise to the Pendidikan and

[11] Subijanto, "Enlightenment and the Revolutionary Press in Colonial Indonesia," 1370–71.

[12] Shiraishi, *The Phantom World of Digul*, 201–5, 235. The state was well aware that the pergerakan was flexible and dynamic under pressure, turning to new forms of activity whenever something was proscribed.

[13] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 157. Daulat Ra'jat only ran from 1931 to 934, ending with the 1934 crackdown in which Sjahrir and Hatta were imprisoned. The Pendidikan, however, was not proscribed, and continued to exist with limited popular influence and intellectual output.

[14] Siegel, *The Rope of God*, 115–27.

PNI, or the networks of reformist Islamic schools run by Sumatra Thawalib, Diniyyah, Muhammadiyah, and Taman Siswa, these educational endeavors expressly aimed to develop "Indonesian" subjects. Their purpose was nothing less than the transmutation of colonial subjects, with localized political allegiances and affective ties, into Indonesian subjects who would constitute the atomic units of a putative polity (Indonesia), a replacement for the incumbent colonial polity (the NEI). This pedagogical endeavor was made possible through the "translation" of other societies' intellectual products and historical experiences. The sources examined below demonstrate the tension between staying true to a distinctly Indonesian identity (which the pergerakan was still in the process of assembling) and "moving" (*bergerak*), making progress toward an Indonesia free from imperial tutelage and free to adapt the best ideas the world had to offer.

Muslim Modernists: *Soeara Islam* and *Soeara PSII*

The confluence of Islamic and socialist ideas was perceptible in modernist Muslim newspapers that embraced the legacy of Sarekat Islam. Modernist or reformist Islam had sunk deep roots in West Sumatra since the nineteenth century, and agitated for the adoption of orthodox Islamic norms in opposition to the *adat*- (custom-)based "traditionalist" Islam that had evolved in tandem with Minangkabau culture over centuries.[15] The West Sumatran *kaum muda* sought to bring Muslims' religious praxis in line with a textually derived vision of "authentic" seventh-century Islamic society, as well as with the prevailing interpretations of Islamic jurisprudence in the Middle East, particularly those of the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence. This did not necessarily connote fundamentalism or conservatism: Muslim modernists rejected unquestioned obedience to the received wisdom of famous jurists, and promoted examining the Qur'an and hadith directly in light of prevailing socioeconomic conditions.[16] The main vectors of transmission for modernist Islamic ideas were pilgrims returning from the hajj (whose numbers expanded dramatically from the late nineteenth century onward with the opening of the Suez Canal), as well as a long tradition of Indies Muslims seeking higher education in Cairo and Mecca; many of

[15] Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*.
[16] Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia*, 61–99.

these eventually returned to Southeast Asia with significant social prestige, broader perspectives about Islam, and strong convictions about what Islamic authenticity looked like.[17] These modernists saw associations, educational institutions, and publishing as key to disseminating their vision of Islam, and they invested heavily in these enterprises.

The modernist Islamic newspaper *Soeara Islam* (1931–33) was a Muhammadiyah-affiliated bimonthly newspaper printed in Bukittinggi, a town in the Minangkabau heartland that both Sjahrir and Hatta had familial ties to.[18] True to modernist form, *Soeara Islam* was deeply concerned with issues of orthodox praxis, devoting most of the January 28, 1933, issue to multiple expositions on the proper praxis in practical matters of almsgiving, prayer, and so on. Of particular interest is the article entitled "Zakat Fithrah," which refers to the institutionalized form of mandatory charity collected at least once each year around Ramadan. The article exhorted its readers to provide zakat either directly to the poor or to an endowment that managed zakat (usually a mosque, or its imam) because zakat was obligatory; it also cautioned that neglecting to do so was a serious sin.[19] The justifications provided for zakat were based on textual evidence: the contents (*matn*), though not the chain of transmission (*isnad*), of a hadith transmitted by Ibnu Omar were reproduced in their entirety in Arabic, and the article claimed that the hadith was accepted as canonical by all four extant Sunni schools of jurisprudence. This was followed by an Indonesian translation of the hadith, and specific instructions on who was eligible for and exempt from zakat.[20] By itself, this article was unremarkable: its emphasis on applying Islamic principles was typical of modernist Muslim discourse.

However, other articles in *Soeara Islam* suggest that this emphasis on zakat can be read in another light. One article by H. Kamaloeddin (the editor of *Soeara Islam*) made a clear connection between the modernist Muslim movement and the anticolonial pergerakan. Kamaloeddin "testified to the convictions of the Muslims," who were willing to "sacrifice themselves for the honor of their religion and their people."[21] Kamaloeddin elaborated:

[17] Abdullah, *Schools and Politics*, 5–17; Eric Tagliacozzo, *The Longest Journey: Southeast Asians and the Pilgrimage to Mecca* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 30.

[18] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 13; Noer, *Mohammad Hatta*, 8. The Muhammadiyah was an ostensibly apolitical education-focused modernist Muslim organization founded by Ahmad Dahlan in Yogyakarta in 1912, which cultivated deep ties to Sarekat Islam during the 1910s.

[19] Anonymous, "Zakat Fithrah," *Soeara Islam*, January 28, 1933.

[20] Ibid.

[21] H. Kamaloeddin, "Pergerakan kaoem moeslimin dengan kemerdekaan Indonesia," *Soeara Islam*, December 1, 1933.

> Indonesian Muslims have a 100% belief in raising the level [political consciousness and economic development] of their people and homeland based on their beloved religion. Truly, the splendor of the Indonesian nation has not yet been realized, because religion has been discarded. The full belief of the Muslims is to erase the attributes of capitalism and imperialism [and replace them] with the rules of Islam.[22]

The article's message was self-consciously Islamic, but not in a conservative sense. Kamaloeddin did not advocate a return to an idealized Islamic past, but rather a reconstruction of Indonesian society based on Islamic principles. He explicitly identified modernist Muslims with the pergerakan cause of Indonesian independence and articulated an Indonesian future in terms of a God-fearing nation. He rejected the status quo of "colonial greediness" (*loba djadjahan*) as well as the entwined structures of imperialism and capitalism.[23] In Kamaloeddin's calculus of progress ("raising the level of their people and homeland"), Islam, independence, and undermining imperialism/capitalism were all inextricably intertwined. Reading the earlier article on zakat in the light of Kamaloeddin's article, its shrill insistence on the mandatory nature of zakat takes on more egalitarian overtones, instead of merely concern for orthopraxy. Zakat was important precisely because modernist Muslims like Kamloeddin hoped for a more egalitarian society, not just because zakat was mandated by Islam; in that sense, Islamic principles could and did go hand in hand with critiques of imperialism and capitalism. This could be construed as influenced by Marxism only in the most superficial sense, but it does provide a telling glimpse into the progressive inhabited by modernist Muslims in West Sumatra.

Modernist Islamic newspapers from Java, such as *Soeara PSII*, also prominently highlighted the importance of zakat.[24] *Soeara PSII* was a monthly newspaper that served as the PSII's journalistic mouthpiece: Harsono Tjokroaminoto, son of the influential Sarekat Islam founder Haji Omar Said Tjokroaminoto, was one of *Soeara PSII*'s editors alongside the future Darul Islam leader Kartosuwirjo.[25] Written in Bahasa Indonesia, *Soeara PSII* was published in Bandung until September 1937. Subsequently published in

[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] M. (alias), "Party Allah Mesti Menang," *Soeara PSII*, November 1937.
[25] Kartosuwirjo was vice president of the PSII from 1936 onward and would go on to lead one of two protracted rebellions against the Indonesian republic, the Darul Islam rebellion, from 1948 onward.

Batavia, *Soeara PSII* ran from 1937 until the Japanese occupation forced it to shut down.[26]

The PSII was heir to Sarekat Islam's legacy of Islamic socialism. After Tjokroaminoto died in 1934, PSII was led by his surviving brother and sons—Abikusono Tjokrosujuso, Harsono Tjokroaminoto, and Anwar Tjokroaminoto.[27] It had been constituted as the Partai Sarekat Islam in 1923 after the definitive break with the PKI, and later reorganized as the Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia in 1929. In contrast to the apolitical Muhammadiyah and the cooperationist Parindra, the PSII tried hard to maintain its policy of noncooperation with the colonial state.[28] This made the PSII particularly amenable to Marxist influence, and Tan Malaka's Partai Republik Indonesia (PARI, Indonesian Republican Party, an underground Communist organization founded after the suppression of the PKI in 1927), successfully made contact with the PSII via Hadji Djalaloeddin Thaib in early 1932, sending PARI literature to Padang Panjang in a stillborn attempt to establish a West Sumatran PARI branch.[29] PARI's noncooperation resulted in the emergence of several splinter factions, notably one led by Tjkroaminoto's right-hand man, the virulent anti-Communist Haji Agus Salim. Salim believed a limited degree of political participation (through the Volksraad, which had its legislative functions expanded slightly in 1925) was possible.[30] The PSII had significant anticolonial cachet, thanks to this policy of noncooperation (hijra), which even Soekarno had publicly abandoned in 1933.[31]

PSII newspapers were not shy to proclaim solidarity with explicitly socialist pergerakan activists. A November 1937 article from *Soeara PSII* entitled "Party Allah Mesti Menang" (The Party of God Will Be Victorious) endorsed Hatta (at this point in exile in Boven Digoel), calling him a true member of the pergerakan who "endeavored to put the laws of God into practice, walking the path of God and following in the example of the prophet."[32] This expression of solidarity suggests that the PSII saw itself as

[26] Muhamad Hisyam, *Caught between Three Fires: The Javanese Pangulu under the Dutch Colonial Administration, 1882–1942* (Jakarta: INIS, 2001), 235. *Soeara PSII* began publication again after independence, and lasted well into the 1950s.

[27] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 45.

[28] Ibid., 43–44.

[29] Shiraishi, *The Phantom World of Digul*, 152, 155–56.

[30] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia,* 43–44; Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900–1942*, 155. These splinter factions included Soekiman's Partai Islam Indonesia (PARTII), the Partai Islam Indonesia (PII), and Haji Agus Salim's Barisan Penjedar PSII.

[31] Legge, *Sukarno*, 153.

[32] M. (alias), "Party Allah Mesti Menang," *Soeara PSII*, November 1937.

a constituent part of pergerakan alongside Hatta's Pendidikan, and the high esteem in which Hatta was held indicates that the PSII was comfortable with the socialist tenor of Pendidikan publications. This sense of belonging to a pergerakan that was broad enough to embrace both Muslims and socialists is echoed in following passage from the same article:

> Our pergerakan has inflicted upon itself various trials and temptations such as the era of *Afdeeling B*:[33] the era of separation from the Communists, resulting in the Sarekat Islam splitting into Red and White branches in 1923; the era of conflict at the [PSII] Betawi Congress of 1933, and many other horrifying events in the life of the party. But none of that was able to cause our pergerakan to slip from the straight path, the true path, the [correct] path according to the divine instructions and the Sunna of the Prophet.[34]

Not only did the author strike a noticeable note of regret when mentioning the split from the Communists, and the subsequent division of Sarekat Islam into pro-Communist and non-Communist factions, he also clearly placed the PSII within a movement ("Our pergerakan") that enjoyed divine sanction. This article posited that the PSII was part of a movement ordained by God and therefore stressed the value of unity, even with the Communists.

This celebration of unity was more rhetoric than reality, for the disagreements of the 1920s had been intense, but it nevertheless shows how some modernist Muslim organizations accepted rapprochement with the Left within the context of the anticolonial struggle. This was not entirely surprising, since the PSII's understanding of Islam's societal role was decidedly progressive:

> But we should not be inclined to blame God and Islam, but instead speak of archaic religion, religion that is inappropriate for the present, and unsuited for the modern age, this modern age, the age of *wetenschap* and *tekniek* [science and technology]! Not an Islam unsuited for the times, but an Islam unsuited for carnality. It is not Islam that is antimodern, or that Islam

[33] Afdeeling B stands for Section B, a shorthand reference to a purported Communist uprising planned by a branch of Sarekat Islam and foiled by the colonial police in 1919. For more on the Afdeeling B, see William A. Oates, "The Afdeeling B: An Indonesian Case Study," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 9 (1968): 107–16.

[34] M. (alias), "Party Allah Mesti Menang," *Soeara PSII*, November 1937.

> cannot be modernized, but instead that modernists, in this age of modern *jahhilliyah* [the pejorative term for pre-Islamic Arabia, the age of ignorance into which Muhammad brought divine guidance] do not understand and do not put into practice the religion that God loves![35]

Statements like these positioned PSII as a firmly Islamic party, but one that flaunted its comfort with the intellectual and technological innovations of Europe. It was a party that saw its goal of creating a model Islamic society as perfectly consistent with the rational Weltanschauung of science.[36] This is perhaps an unsurprising perspective for a society that, as Mrázek memorably put it, existed "simultaneously at the farthest reaches of modernity and close to its most dynamic center . . . both at the periphery and next to the center of empire and the world."[37]

This was, after all, the party of Tjokroaminoto, author of *Islam dan Sosialisme*. One of the PSII's five founding principles was the recognition that capitalism was the cause of the *rakyat*'s suffering, and that the PSII must combat capitalism at its very roots.[38] From this position, it would have been a short step to reconcile *kaum muda* Islamic modernism to Hatta's socialist convictions. The PSII was not ashamed of its historical cooperation with Communists. Theirs was an interpretation of Islam that stressed its flexibility and commitment to socioeconomic justice, which posited the continuing relevance of Islam in a world dominated by Euro-American science and technology. It pushed back against Orientalist assumptions about the civilizational integrity of Muslim societies, proclaiming the relevance of Islam as both an ethical system and a blueprint for societal organization, one supple enough to accommodate European ideologies like socialism.

Muslim men were not the only contributors to this discourse. The PSII had an affiliated women's organization named Sjarikat Poetri Islam Indonesia (SPII, League of Indonesian Islamic Women) whose members actively participated in the PSII's deliberations over how Islamic moral values ought to be manifest politically, economically, and socially. The SPII claimed a membership of approximately sixty-five hundred in 1939, making it the

[35] Ibid.

[36] This was the distinctive flavor it would lend to the modernist Islamic political party Masjumi, whose ranks were full of Permi and PSII alumni for the first few years of its existence.

[37] Rudolf Mrázek, *Engineers of Happy Land: Technology and Nationalism in a Colony* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), xv–xvi.

[38] Valina Singka Subketi, *Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2010), 34.

second-largest religious women's organization of the day, second only to Muhammadiyah's Aisyiyah.[39] Originally an outgrowth of PSII's Garut, West Java branch, it quickly became PSII's official women's wing, incorporating older PSII affiliates such as Wanodijo Oetomo and Perhimpoenan Siti Patimah.[40] Like the vast majority of pergerakan women's organizations, SPII's conception of women's activism fell within the gendered constraints that Chatterjee and Taylor describe.[41] The SPII's five founding principles were "worship of God," "devotion to one's husband," "educating one's children properly," "administering the household," and "giving thanks to one's parents."[42] These principles stressed the gendered division of labor in nationalist discourse, in which women were relegated to the roles of caregiver, custodian, and educator. Their existence was defined in relation to their husbands, parents, and children, in the roles of daughter, wife, and mother.

By 1940, Marxist influence emanating from the Pendidikan, Gerindo, and the PSII itself had begun to make perceptible inroads in SPII discourse, particularly in relation to methods of mobilization and demographic targets. Hints of this first emerge in a book titled *Boekoe Peringatan Pergerakan Isteri P.S.I.I. 1918–1940*, published by SPII to mark its twenty-second anniversary. One of the articles of the SPII charter stressed the need to act "in accordance with the commands of God and his Prophet, in all matters of life, the pursuit of a livelihood [*reziki*], and harmonious coexistence with one another, improve our fate and level [*deradjat*] in accordance with the times."[43] This seems innocuous enough at first glance, but the mention of *rezeki* for a women's organization is remarkable. *Rezeki* is best translated as livelihood or sustenance, and it has strong connotations of making "an honest living," as opposed to exploiting one's fellow man. In this article, *rezeki* was framed not as a matter of Islamic orthopraxy alone, but as something that ought to facilitate the material and spiritual improvement of humanity. It would not be sufficient, in this formulation, to return to an imagined golden age, or simply stiffen the moral fiber of society. It was forward-looking, connecting a (spiritually) honest living with societal harmony and material

[39] Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia*, 20.

[40] Sjarikat Poetri Islam Indonesia, *Boekoe Peringatan Pergerakan Isteri P.S.I.I. 1918–1940* (Garoet: Madjelis Department Pergerakan Isteri PSII, 1940), 15.

[41] Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, 126–27; Jean Gelman Taylor, "Equality? The Influence of Legislation and Notions of Gender on the Position of Women Wage Workers in the Economy: Indonesia 1950–58," in *Women Creating Indonesia*, ed. Jean Gelman Taylor (Clayton, Victoria: Monash Asia Institute, 1993), 95.

[42] Sjarikat Poetri Islam Indonesia, *Boekoe Peringatan Pergerakan Isteri P.S.I.I. 1918–1940,* 12–13.

[43] Ibid., 16.

improvement. This was particularly interesting, coming from a women's organization whose founding principles had nothing to do with economics, focusing instead on making its members good daughters, mothers, and wives. Despite these founding principles, the SPII's "work program" included the formation of a peasant women's association, a general women's labor union, women's associations or guilds for specific trades, and a body responsible for educating peasant women.[44] It is doubtful that any of these fine ideas that resemble socialist mobilization were realized until the 1945 revolution, but it does show how new horizons for women's activism were emerging.

The SPII's progressive articulation of Islam was evident in other essays from this book as well. The head of SPII's governing council, S. Yati, contributed an essay titled "Gerak-langkah Pergerakan Isteri PSII," in which she argued that men and women were essentially equal, because men and women had the same rights and mental abilities, though she did recognize biological differences.[45] With that in mind, S. Yati went on to argue that the positions that women occupied, and their obligations to society, should change. In the realm of marriage, S. Yati contended that God frowned on marriage as a means to sate carnal desires (a common justification for polygyny), drawing on the example of Muhammad's marriage to Siti Aisyah as evidence. She argued that the Prophet married the underage Siti Aisyah not to sate his *hawa nafsu*, but because he perceived her potential capacity for transmitting prophetic wisdom, which would later become evident in her role as a conduit for hundreds of hadith.[46] Citing Siti Aisyah's major contributions to Islam, S. Yati argued that women's lives should not be centered around marriage, and that they had an obligation to "know their economic rights" as well as "understand national regulations and politics."[47] The SPII by 1940 was an organization headed by women who believed, like many others, that Islam represented the triumph of *akal* over *nafsu*, and were themselves exercising their God-given *akal* to reconceptualize gender norms and the place of women in Indonesian society.

From this position, it becomes less surprising that S. Yati's other articles evinced a strong focus on class and gender. In "Pergerakan Perempoean dan

[44] Ibid., 27–28.
[45] Ibid., 44.
[46] Ibid., 45.
[47] Ibid., 47. Yati's position on marriage even attracted support from the PSII leadership itself. Abikoesono Tjokrosoejoso contributed a short article to this book, in which he condemned *adat* (customary law) for endorsing the superiority of husbands over wives in marriage, and stressed that Islamic marriage constituted a contract between two consenting individuals, not their families.

Indonesia Berparlement," she argued that women had to be aware of political and economic issues, and called on Indonesian women to organize and pressure the government to improve the working conditions of Indonesian women, regardless of race.[48] She specifically argued that it was the responsibility of the *ra'jat* (masses) to mobilize themselves to "protect the sick and suffering," including women.[49] Yati went on to point out that working-class women were routinely paid half of what their male counterparts earned, a practice endemic to plantation agriculture. She also highlighted the suffering of female peasant sharecroppers, who often did not receive their share of the harvest, and were paid a measly nine cents a day on average.[50] With perceptible outrage, she wrote that peasant women in Cirebon and Pekalongan were sometimes paid as little as two cents a day.[51] She capped this all by arguing that "capitalists specifically exploit the native working-class women [*boeroeh rendahan poetri*] by deliberately depressing their wages."[52] This situation, she argued, was a "danger to our souls and spirits, a danger to our material existence as well as our interior spirituality [*lahir-bathin*]."[53] This did not constitute an explicit theorization of compatibility between Islam and socialism, but the influence of socialist concerns and critiques was undeniable, and the intersection of gender and labor issues was embedded within an Islamic moral framework.

The Persatuan Muslim Indonesia (Permi)

Of all the Muslim modernist movements of the 1930s, none was more open to Marxist ideas than the Persatuan Muslim Indonesia (the Union of Indonesian Muslims, henceforth, Permi). Permi was founded in 1930 by former students and faculty of the Sumatra Thawalib schools. It was also notable for having a significant number of female members, including in core leadership roles. These Thawalib alumni had organized their own alumni association, the Persatuan Sumatera Thawalib, in 1928, after the arrest and flight of both Islamic and Marxist radicals in 1926–27. During their

[48] Ibid., 76–84.
[49] Ibid., 84.
[50] Ibid., 79, 81.
[51] Ibid., 81.
[52] Ibid., 82.
[53] Ibid.

third annual congress, this alumni association reorganized itself as Permi in 1930.[54] Permi inherited the intellectual legacy of the Sumatra Thawalib schools, including its divergent impulses. As with the Sumatra Thawalib student body, not all members of Permi were sympathetic to Communism, but it would be safe to say that they were drawn to a vision of Islam that combatively arraigned itself against the impositions of the extractive colonial state, and which aggressively embraced a policy of noncooperation with a view toward eventual independence. The congruence between the Persatuan Sumatra Thawalib and Permi was evident in the location of Permi's first headquarters: it was founded in Padang Panjang, the home of the original and most radical of the five Sumatra Thawalib schools, where Haji Datuk Batuah had taught. Moreover, Permi members themselves openly admitted, in speeches like the one given by Hadji Abdoel Madjid at the second Permi conference of September 1932, that Permi was a direct continuation of the Sumatra Thawalib student movement.[55] By 1930, Permi had grown into one of the more prominent pergerakan organizations, with branches in Tapanuli, East Sumatra, Aceh in the far northwest, and Bengkulu in South Sumatra. It was prolific in publishing anticolonial newspapers and pamphlets, running schools, and founding scouting organizations, and even held some public rallies.[56] At its peak in December 1932, Permi claimed over seventy-seven hundred members—three thousand of whom were women, and they were not organized in a separate wing, as was common at the time.[57] This was an unusually large proportion, and made Permi one of the most important incubators for female pergerakan activists.

Permi was effectively neutered by the colonial security apparatus in December 1932, when Permi executive board member Rasuna Said was arrested, followed by the arrest of core Permi leaders like Rasimah Ismail, Muchtar Lutfi, Iljas Jacub, and Djalaluddin Thaib throughout 1933. Lutfi, Jacub, and Thaib had been key Sumatra Thawalib figures, having taught at various Sumatra Thawalib schools and published newspapers like *Medan Ra'jat* throughout the 1920s and early 1930s. After being put on trial, many of them were subjected to house arrest and incarceration, while others were exiled to Boven Digoel, the colonial penal colony that housed numerous

[54] Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 53.
[55] Hadji Abdoel Madjid, "Ringkasan Pidato Pemboekaan Konperensi PMI Ke 2," *Medan Ra'jat*, September 10, 1932.
[56] Ingleson, *Road to Exile*, 230.
[57] Ibid.

PKI members exiled after the 1926–27 uprisings, including many Islamic Communists with Sumatra Thawalib connections. While Permi continued to exist until 1937, under the leadership of Muhammad Sjafei, it had ceased to be a meaningful force in pergerakan activism by 1934.[58]

At the national level, Permi was open to limited cooperation with Soekarno's Partindo.[59] Permi leaders traveled frequently to Java to meet with Soekarno, and even participated in Partindo rallies, ultimately signing a document establishing that each party would refrain from competing with the other in their respective strongholds.[60] This was typical for the 1930s: future Masjumi leader Soekiman's splinter faction of the PSII, the Partai Islam Indonesia, looked set to cooperate with the Pendidikan in August 1933, before the arrest and exile of Sjahrir and Hatta.[61] In both cases, the Marxist inspirations of the Pendidikan and Partindo's *Marhaenisme* did not constitute a serious barrier to potential cooperation, although there were certainly those in both parties who opposed working with nationalists who did not prioritize Islam as the fundamental basis for an independent Indonesia.[62]

The combination of Islamic and socialist discourses circulating among Permi activists was evident in the publications of Permi-linked schools. The Islamic College of Padang was founded by Permi activists in May 1931, and long outlived Permi itself. It offered a four-year modernist Islamic education at the tertiary level, only admitting students that had already undergone a primary education.[63] Many of its teachers were alumni of the Sumatra Thawalib or Diniyyah schools. Many of its graduates, after having undergone training in the affiliated Teachers' Training College in nearby Payakumbuh, went on to teach in the smaller Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah schools.[64] Its curriculum was distinctly modernist: among other subjects, it offered

[58] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 49.

[59] Partindo was a successor party to Soekarno's PNI, but unlike the now-proscribed PNI Partindo abandoned noncooperation. After his December 1931 release from a stint in prison, Soekarno chose to join Partindo. By August 1933, Partindo claimed twenty thousand members in Java. See Abdullah, *Schools and Politics*, 185.

[60] Ingleson, *Road to Exile*,>/IBT> 197.

[61] Ibid. Soekiman and Hatta were personal friends and pious Muslims, although their political commitments differed.

[62] *Marhaen* was a conceptual category popularized by Soekarno that included smallholders, shopkeepers, petty traders, and cottage industry workers, among other occupations, as well as the indigent poor like sharecroppers or seasonal laborers, incorporating societal elements that Marx and Engels would have classed as the lumpenproletariat or *mittelstand*. See Soekarno, *Marhaen and Proletarian*.

[63] Erman, *Pergerakan Nasional Dalam Teks Media Di Minangkabau 1933–1936* (Padang: Imam Bonjol Press, 2014), 68.

[64] Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 82.

classes in Arabic, Dutch, English, basic German, and basic French; the classical Islamic sciences like *tafsir* and *fiqh*; mathematics, geography, history, political science; and even vocational courses in journalism, music, painting, agriculture, and teaching.[65] Just like the Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah schools, the Islamic College rejected colonial government subsidies (unlike Muhammadiyah schools), and its "secular" curriculum was independent of the state-sponsored one.[66]

From 1933 onward, Permi's Islamic College published a periodical titled *Madjallah Raya* (lit. the great magazine), which had a broad readership across the Indies. Erman's study of *Madjallah Raya*'s advertisements and subscriber lists suggest that subscribers were to be found in forty-four different cities in the Indies, from Aceh in the far West to Makassar in the East.[67] A quick glance at the kinds of articles published in *Madjallah Raya* reveals its leftist sympathies: articles like "Partai-Partai Kiri Apa Kabar?" (1935, What News from the Parties of the Left?) and "Hatta-Sjahrir" (1936) were commonplace.[68] At the same time, Islamic issues remained central. Articles such as "Reformatie dalam Onderwijs Islam" (1935, Reforming Islamic Education) and "Organisasi Pergoeroean Islam" (1935, Islamic School Organizations) were fixtures. Pendidikan members in West Sumatra were often drawn from the modernist Islamic schools, and Permi's Islamic College was no exception. Its publishing activities reveal its immersion in the same milieu as the Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah schools, one that was distinctly Islamic but strongly attracted to the socialist ideas of Sjahrir and Hatta.

Permi's main press organ, *Medan Ra'jat*, was more explicit in its critique of capitalism and imperialism, drawing inspiration from Lenin's *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1919) and Karl Kautsky's *Imperialism and the War* (1914). *Medan Ra'jat* began publication in 1931 under Iljas Jacoub's editorship and was published thrice each month in Padang. It was a distinctly regional paper, circulating mainly in West Sumatran towns like Payakumbuh, Padang Panjang, Kerinci, Padang, Manindjau, and Bukittingi. It was remarkably strident in its explicit support for independent Indonesia, to such an extent that it attracted colonial suppression in late 1932. Tellingly, it often published short articles tracking the movements of Hatta upon his return from Europe, and was clearly comfortable with his Marxist sympathies,

[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid., 83–84.
[67] Erman, *Pergerakan Nasional Dalam Teks Media di Minangkabau 1933–1936*, 69–70.
[68] Ibid., 75.

which were by then well publicized in *Kedaulatan Ra'jat* and other Pendidikan periodicals. It also regularly expressed sympathy for and solidarity with known Communists, such as Sardjono, Alimin, and Musso of the PKI, as well as Rustam Effendi of the Communist Party of the Netherlands.[69] Beyond rhetoric, it took concrete steps like soliciting donations to pay the legal fees for pergerakan activists in trouble with the law: the beneficiaries included Soekarno, Abdul Manaf, M. Yamin, Muchtar Luthfi, Iljas Jacoub, Amir Sjarifuddin, and Ki Sarmidi Mangunsarkoro, several of whom were known for their Marxist sympathies.[70]

Critiques of capital and empire abounded in *Medan Ra'jat*. One article by Loetan Gani argued that imperialism was a "hackneyed" (*kolot*) system, while nationalism was "modern" and strongly implied to be more rational.[71] It argued that *nafsoe Imperialisme* was driven by a quest for profits. It acknowledged imperialism's dynamism (*kepandaian*) but condemned it as one that was acquisitive and covetous. It accused imperialism of continually seeking "more territory to conquer, aided by yet more machines and factories, which in turn incentivized the acquisition of more territory and business opportunities."[72] Loetan Gani also argued that imperialism incentivized war, citing the examples of the First World War and Japan's imposition of its Twenty-One Demands on China (1915).[73] Most interestingly of all, the article also embraced the rhetoric of internationalist anti-imperial solidarity. It praised anti-imperial movements and their leaders in Egypt (Zaglal Pasha), Iraq (Pasha el Atrashi), Turkey (Ataturk), Bolivia (San Martín and Simón Bolívar), and the Philippines (José Rizal and Manuel Quezon), discussing each example in significant detail.[74] Other articles even praised Turkey's 1932 decision to join the League of Nations while maintaining good diplomatic relations with the USSR by signing a treaty of mutual recognition and friendship, striking a clearly sympathetic tone toward the USSR.[75]

[69] Anonymous, "Berita Dari Belanda," *Medan Ra'jat*, September 10, 1932. This particular article made a point of praising Rustam Effendi, a former pergerakan playwright and member of the Dutch House of Representatives (Tweede Kamer) from 1933 to 1946, for rebutting the Dutch attorney general's derogatory comments on the NEI.

[70] Anonymous, "Indonesia Berdjoang!," *Medan Ra'jat*, November 1, 1932.

[71] Loetan Gani, "Perdjoangan Imperialisme dan Nationalisme," *Medan Ra'jat*, September 10, 1932.

[72] Ibid.

[73] This included Japan inheriting imperial Germany's possession in China, including Shandong province.

[74] Loetan Gani, "Perdjoangan Imperialisme dan Nationalisme," *Medan Ra'jat*, September 10, 1932.

[75] Anonymous, "Turkie dan Volkenbond [LON]," *Medan Ra'jat*, September 10, 1932. The treaty in question was likely to be the Soviet-Turkish nonaggression pact originally signed on December 17, 1925, and subsequently extended twice.

Permi's points of reference were legion, demonstrating a particular willingness to learn from anticolonial movements in the Islamic world and Asia.

Medan Ra'jat evinced a strong awareness of the need for practical measures, and familiarity with the Marxist critique of capital as entwined with imperialism. One article by M. Dang Jogja argued that because capitalism and imperialism went hand in hand, Indonesia had much to learn from Gandhi's Swadeshi movement. It explained how *kaoem kapitalisten* extracted profits from Indonesia not merely by exploiting its *grondstoffen* (natural resources) cheaply, but also through creating a captive market in which processed goods could be sold without competition, while simultaneously raising revenue through export duties.[76] Another article in *Medan Ra'jat* cited Sura al-Qasas, 76, of the Qur'an to support its argument that God required Muslims to look not only to the afterlife but also to this one, exhorting them to not forget the welfare of one's fellow man in this world. In that vein, it went on to proudly proclaim that Permi had set up a "business council" (*dewan peroeashaan*) to support Indonesian businesses, which it explicitly distinguished from "capitalist businesses" (*peroesahaan kapitalis*), because the Indonesian business it supported operated as cooperatives, with profits distributed among the cooperative's members.[77] Unsurprisingly, capitalist businesses were explicitly associated with *nafsu Imperialisme* multiple times.[78] It concluded that "true [*suci*, lit. holy] nationalism" opposed capitalism; Indonesian business endeavors needed to be organized in a *cooperatief* way, such that they would not give birth to capitalist enterprises.[79] Such articles evinced a sophisticated awareness that colonial capitalism was not simply a matter of colonial exploitation, but a fundamentally inequitable and paradigmatic economic system that exerted influence throughout the economy.

Other articles published in *Medan Ra'jat* evinced a willingness to learn from the experience of European and American socialists, as well as to propose concrete solutions adapted to the NEI's circumstances. Aziz Thaib argued for the creation of peasant cooperatives, which would allow farmers to stop relying on flour merchants who "suck the blood of the people and who demand more profit than is appropriate."[80] Drawing on the example of nineteenth-century English cooperatives, he claimed that peasant

[76] M. Dang Jogja, "Pergerakan Swadeshi," *Medan Ra'jat*, September 20, 1932.
[77] Dt. Penghoeloe (pseudonym), "Sifat Toedjoean dan Asas PMI," *Medan Ra'jat*, September 20, 1932.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Aziz Thaib, "Menoendjoe Cooperatie Ra'jat Indonesia," *Medan Ra'jat*, November 1, 1932.

cooperatives could be set up with as little as f325 in communal capital.[81] These cooperatives would purportedly ease the problem of limited access to credit, because farmers rarely had the connections or collateral to obtain loans from urban banks, and relied instead on rural moneylenders who charged exorbitant interest rates. Without providing a specific example, Dang Jugja claimed that capitalists in the contemporary United States were grumbling because they had "met their match" in farmers' cooperatives and "could no longer do as they pleased."[82] An editorial note appended to this article even made a point of stating that cooperatives with "capitalist characteristics" were in opposition to "our pergerakan," and called on cooperatives to guard against the creeping infiltration of capitalist practices by reminding them of their Islamic moral obligations.[83] A series of articles penned by Dang Jugja in late 1932 wrote glowingly of Marx and his various interpreters, even going so far as to quote Stalin (in English) and translate it into Bahasa Indonesia.[84] Intriguingly, the various strains of Marxism were described as *tarekat* (Sufi brotherhoods built around saintly and scholarly lineages), an excellent example of how Marxism was indigenized or made relevant within an Islamic vernacular.[85] Finally, the article also discussed the USSR and the various German social democratic parties of the interwar period and exhorted the pergerakan to learn from their experiences.[86] These articles in *Medan Ra'jat* were visibly "translating" Marxism to Indonesia—whether literally translating Stalin's words or more indirectly making sense of Marxist movements in other parts of the world—and were doing so in a way that relied on Islamic vocabulary and ethical justifications.

Permi was exceptional among pergerakan organizations for having an unusually large number of prominent female leaders. Jean Gelman Taylor has rightly argued that women's contributions have been largely excised from scholarship on the pergerakan. She mentions Shiraishi's *An Age in Motion* as an example of an otherwise excellent academic study that makes almost

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid. It seems likely that the author was referring to the Socialist Party of America (f. 1901) and its predecessors, which had achieved significant local and regional electoral success in the first quarter of the twentieth century, with strong links to trade unions and rural cooperatives, under Eugene V. Debs's leadership.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Dang Jugja, "Nasionalisme dan Islamisme," *Medan Ra'jat*, December 1, 1932.

[85] Oliver Crawford, "Translating and Transliterating Marxism in Indonesia," *Modern Asian Studies*, 2020, 1–37, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X20000104.

[86] Ibid.

no mention of women.[87] Taylor argues that this scholarly failing reflects the tenor of nationalist discourse of the 1920s and 1930s, which "placed the new Indonesian man at center stage and directed women to subordinate positions."[88] She points out that many women's organizations were defined by a host of gender roles assigned to women: organizations bore names such as "Independent Daughters," "Active Wives," and "Mothers' Group."[89] Even progressive organizations like Istri Sedar and Istri Insaf, in which anti-polygyny activists like Soewarni Pringgodigdo were active, conceived of their members as *istri* (wives).

This phenomenon of linguistic relegation or circumscription of women is well known in other nationalist contexts, as in early twentieth-century Iran, where women were conceived by male nationalists as simultaneously "sister citizens" and charges in need of protection.[90] It was only in 1928 that the Perikatan Perempuan Indonesia was formed, an organization that conceived of its members as *perempuan* (women) rather than mothers or daughters. Nevertheless, women were still strongly defined by gender rather than by political orientation. Accordingly, the goals embraced by these organizations were distinctly gendered: access to education for women, equal pay for female laborers, securing women's consent for polygyny, and so on. It was women in Islamic organizations like Permi who most often broke this mold, becoming involved in mainstream politics on par with their male counterparts. In several cases, their ideas evinced intersections of Marxism, Islamic faith, and women's rights activism.

The existence of Permi's remarkable female leaders requires some historical contextualization. The first NEI women's congress was held in Yogyakarta 1928, which marked the distinctly pro-pergerakan turn in the character of most women's organizations.[91] Women's participation in radical pergerakan activism, however, predated the congress by several years. As early as 1922, Tjokroaminoto's wife, Soeharsikin (aka Woro Tjokroaminoto), had given speeches at meetings of Sarekat Islam's Garut branch. This was quickly followed by the foundation of Sarekat Islam's women's wing in 1923, with an all-female executive board. Later that year, Soeharsikin herself

[87] Jean Gelman Taylor, "Introduction," in *Women Creating Indonesia*, ed. Jean Gelman Taylor (Clayton, Victoria: Monash Asia Institute, 1993), xii.
[88] Taylor, "Equality?," 95.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Women with Moustaches, Men without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 207–14.
[91] Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia*, 50.

founded a women's organization separate from Sarekat Islam, Wanodiyo Utomo, in Surabaya. Some women became regular speakers at the meetings of various Sarekat Islam branches; these included Woro Sostroatmojo in Pare (Kediri regency) and Manusiah in Semarang.[92] Women's overt participation in pergerakan activism quickly became normalized. In more explicitly Marxist circles, Woro Kurliah-Jayadireja gave speeches to meetings of the VSTP's Batavia branch on the importance of increasing women's participation in pergerakan activism.[93] One Woro Tetes addressed the VSTP's 1922 conference in Semarang. When the PSII was established in 1929, Soeharsikin headed its women's wing, and ranking members of the women's wing, such as Woro Sumuadinoto and Siti Rukaeni, addressed the inaugural PSII general congress (1929) in Surabaya.[94]

It is telling, of course, that most of the women mentioned above were identified in relation to their husbands during the 1920s. The prefix *Woro* functions much the same way that "Mrs." does, subsuming a woman's identity under that of her husband's name. It is equally telling that women were often organized in a separate wing of pergerakan organizations during this period, metaphorically and structurally "quarantined" from the "main" organization. This strongly suggests a conceptual attachment to the idea that female activists were complementary to male activists, but not their legitimate equals.

In the 1930s, female Permi activists like Rasuna Said broke with this model of anticolonial activism. Critiques of economic exploitation of the Indies in general and women in particular, which were particularly hideous on the tobacco and sugar plantations, began to be articulated by women's organizations in the 1930s.[95] This was especially evident in Permi, which did not separate its female members into a women's wing, and which was led by several prominent women during the early 1930s. Similar processes occurred in other parts of the Islamic world, such as Iran, with women resisting and redefining their roles as mothers, wives, and charges in need of defense.[96] In the Indonesian case, Chatterjee's arguments about the compartmentalization of women become less applicable over the 1930s. This was a slow process to begin with, but it eventually accelerated with the appointment of female

[92] Blackburn, "Indonesian Women and Political Islam," 86.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid., 87.
[95] Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870–1979*, 31–33.
[96] Najmabadi, *Women with Moustaches, Men without Beards*, 222–24.

cabinet ministers with known Marxist sympathies like S. K. Trimurti during the 1945 revolution.

The 1930s saw stirrings of female pergerakan activism focused on the intersection of gender and labor. The NEI Labor Office, an underfunded organ charged with enforcing paltry International Labor Organization protections that the Netherlands had ratified in 1922, published the second volume of its Batik Report in 1932. Containing copious evidence of how women were regularly paid less than their male counterparts, and often subject to sexual exploitation at the workplace, it galvanized women to mobilize against egregious exploitation in the batik industry. This response was circumscribed by repressive policing, but it did lead to the creation of the Komite Pembela Kaum Buruh Perempuan Indonesia (Committee to Defend Indonesian Women Workers) in Yogyakarta in 1932.[97] By 1932, Istri Sedar, the women's rights organization led by Suwarni Pringgodigdo and with strong links to both the PNI and the Pendidikan, had also taken up the issue, investigating the horrific working conditions of women factory laborers, petty traders, and domestic servants and resolving to advocate for their labor rights, although these efforts yielded few concrete results.[98]

These new fields of female activism were supported by *kaum muda* educational institutions like the Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah schools; their modernist worldviews expanded the possibilities for women's participation in political discourse, paving the way for female activists like Rasuna Said to sit on Permi's central board. *Kaum muda* institutions were open to innovative approaches to spreading their ideas, *tabligh* gatherings being the most effective among them. Their arsenal also included novel pedagogical practices like the division of students into clearly defined grades (rather than the traditional open-ended apprenticeship to a master), a willingness to use colloquial Malay instead of scholarly Arabic in their sermons, and the use of modernist textbooks imported from Egypt. The Diniyyah school in Padang Panjang, a *kaum muda* institution, was among the first to begin admitting female students in coeducational classes.[99] This was virtually

[97] Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia*, 171–74.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Earlier organizations like Poetri Mardika (f. 1912, Batavia) and Keradjinan Amai Setia (f. 1914, Koto Gadang, West Sumatra) had advocated for women's education and established women's schools. The Diniyyah school, however, was significant for being among the first to allow women to enroll in a prestigious coeducational institution that taught both secular and Islamic subjects up to the tertiary level, predating the better-known coeducational Taman Siswa schools (1922, Yogyakarta) by several years. See Martyn, *The Women's Movement in Post-colonial Indonesia*, 39.

unheard of outside of the European schools that occasionally educated the daughters of native elites. The Dinyyah school itself had been founded in 1915 by Zainuddin Labai el-Junusy, an alumnus and former teacher of the Sumatra Thawalib school in Padang Panjang. The Permi leader Rasuna Said attended the Diniyyah school, as did many Pendidikan socialists like Djoeir Moehamad and Leon Salim.

Zainuddin's sister, Ramah el-Junusiyyah, founded the Diniyyah Putri school for girls in 1923, in Padang Panjang. Rasuna Said joined the staff as an assistant teacher in 1923, and except for the two years she spent in Maninjau, she taught there until 1931.[100] The Diniyyah schools were emblematic of the willingness of *kaum muda* institutions to educate women rigorously in both religious and secular subjects. With the education afforded by *kaum muda* educational institutions like the Diniyyah, Sumatra Thawalib, and Muhammadiyah schools, Indonesian Muslim women had the opportunity to exercise their intellects and voices as journalists, activists, and teachers. The concentration of such institutions in West Sumatra meant that Minangkabau women became prominent participants in nationalist politics. Some, like Permi's female leaders, used this capacity to cogently express their Islamic identity alongside their strong commitment to social justice.

By the end of 1932, Permi was formally constituted as a political party with 160 branches spread across Sumatra. It claimed a membership of seventy-seven hundred, of whom approximately three thousand were women.[101] Three prominent Minangkabau women, Rasuna Said, Rasimah Ismail, and Ratna Sari, sat on Permi's central board and were among the first to be targeted by the colonial security apparatus when it moved against Permi in December 1932. After Rasuna Said's and Rasimah Ismail's arrest in December 1932, and the wave of arrests that followed, Ratna Sari was elected Permi's first female president in late 1933. By this point, Permi was now seriously open to female leadership, a concept virtually unheard of in other pergerakan organizations. Rasuna Said's and Rasimah Ismail's speeches, both the ones that led to *spreekdelict* charges as well as the ones delivered while they were on trial, were sufficiently inspiring that new ground was broken for the possible modalities of women's activism.[102] Newspapers like *Tjaja Sumatra* covered

[100] Sally White, "Rasuna Said: Lioness of the Indonesian Independence Movement," in *Women in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements*, ed. Susan Blackburn and Helen Ting (Singapore: NUS Press, 2013), 104, 107.

[101] Ingleson, *Road to Exile,* 230, and Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 55.

[102] White, "Rasuna Said," 111.

their arrests and trials intensively, printing their speeches in full; Permi's own *Medan Ra'jat* fiercely expressed support for "iboe Permi" (Permi's mothers), and compared Rasuna Said's contribution to those made by the prominent male pergerakan activists, such as Hatta, Moechtar Loethfi, and Mohammad Yamin.[103] The status of pergerakan martyr was no longer the exclusive province of men like Soekarno, Hatta, and Sjahrir.

Beyond its top leadership, Permi also included women such as Kanin R. A. S., Chasjiah A. R., and Siti Adam Addarkawi, all of whom were teachers at the Diniyyah school and heavily influenced by Rasuna Said. Their anticolonial pedagogy was made clear when all three became subject to a teaching ban (*onderwijs verbod*) after a Politieke Inlichtingen Dienst (PID, Political Intelligence Office) inspection of the school in 1933.[104] Chasjiah A. R., in particular, was known as a fiery speaker. She took the stage at Permi's second congress in October 1932, and openly criticized male pergerakan activists for indulging the assumption that women were weak and deficient (*kekoerangan*) in relation to men.[105] She accepted the reality that women were indeed less well educated and generally physically weaker than men, but argued that women had just as much ability to influence society as men did, both as activists and as the first teachers of every child. She justified this with an unspecified hadith, claiming that the Prophet once said that "women are a nation's pillar of security. When women are harmed, the whole nation is harmed. Paradise, which you all desire, is to be found under the soles of a woman's feet."[106]

At the same time, Chasijah A. R. spoke admiringly of European societies that had enfranchised women and equalized their legal rights with those of men. Rhetorically, she asked whether Indonesians were destined by God to suffer oppression and humiliation as slaves, their lands occupied and their economy just another profitable market in the global economy (*pasaran doenia oentoek mentjari koetoengan dan laba*).[107] She argued that the pergerakan could either continue to treat women as burdens to be borne in their long fight for independence, or co-opt them as partners, as Japan,

[103] Permi, "Rasuna Said: Kekoeasan pemerentah Belanda kepada seorang Perempoean," *Medan Ra'jat*, December 20, 1932.

[104] National Archives, The Hague, Ministry of Colonies: Political Reports and Reports from the Extraordinary Regions, number access 2.10.52.01, inventory number 108.

[105] Chasjiah AR, "Kebangkitan Pergerakan Poetri," *Medan Ra'jat*, October 1, 1932.

[106] Ibid. Chasjiah A.R. was likely paraphrasing from Al-Nasa'I's collection of hadith, *Al-Sunan al-Sughra*, one of the six canonical collections of Sunni hadith. See Sunan an-Nasa" 3104 (book 25, hadith 20).

[107] Ibid.

China, Turkey, and India had.[108] She concluded by praising the Perserikatan Perhimpunan Istri Indonesia (PPII, Union of Indonesian Wives' Collectives, founded in 1929) for its economic activism in batik factories, organizing protests against systemic exploitation of women dyers; she suggested that Permi emulate the PPII in this regard. Refusing to accept the gendered division of labor in nationalist discourse, Chasjiah A. R. articulated her labor and women's rights activism within an Islamic moral framework.

Permi's first female president, Ratna Sari, embraced an understanding of Islam that readily lent itself to social justice and egalitarianism. Her speeches from the 1930s illustrate how Permi's female leaders facilitated conciliations of Islam and socialism in Permi circles. In 1950, she published *Kedudukan Wanita Dalam Hukum Islam*, which was based on several speeches she gave at the second Indonesian women's congress (Kongres Perempoean Indonesia ke-II) in Batavia in 1935.[109] Ratna Sari began by claiming that Islam brought *akal* into the prevailing *nafsu* of the *jahiliyyah*. She frequently referenced European scholarship, regularly citing Edward Gibbon and Gustave Le Bon's work to support her arguments, and used Dutch words like *sfeer* (sphere) and *prae-adviezen* (advice) liberally. She depicted Sassanid Persia and Christian Rome as degenerate societies, fallen far from the lofty principles of Zoroastrianism and Stoicism, and given over to the pursuit of worldly pleasures, material wealth, and secular power. In this era, women "remained the playthings of worldly desires" (*tetap dalam derajat permainan nafsu*), and "existed only to please men."[110] Ratna Sari condemned Hinduism's patriarchal notions of women's servitude, as well as the caste system in general. She reserved her harshest criticism for pre-Islamic Arabian society, which she says considered women to be the "trash of the world."[111] For Ratna Sari, *jahiliyya* typified the patriarchal cultures dominant across the ancient world: she wrote admiringly of the Zoroastrian reformer Mazdak, whose "proto-socialist" reforms she credits with beginning to heal the spiritual sickness (*penjakit rohani*) of Persia.[112]

According to Ratna Sari, it was Islam that brought an end to the oppression of women of the *jahiliyyah* through its introduction of new ethical values, which were themselves symbols of societal progress (*kemadjuan*

[108] Ibid.
[109] Ratna Sari, *Kedudukan Wanita Dalam Hukum Islam* (Medan: Islamyah, 1950), 4. The first edition of this book was published in 1939 under the title *Hak Perempoean Dalam Hoekoem Islam*.
[110] Ibid., 9.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid., 10.

kemanusiaan). She argued that Islam spread these new ethical values by initiating a struggle (*perdjuangan*), a grand global revolution (*revolutie akbar sedunia*).[113] "Progress" was a recurring concept in this book, and she defined it as both a key purpose and an attribute of Islam. She went on to argue that the characteristics of Islam in relation to society were, first, to improve society; second, to save society (in the sense of salvation, as expressed in Sura Ibrahim, 1); and third, to "enact progress" (*memadjiukan*) in society. Juxtaposed against this emphasis on progress and revolution was her conceptualization of Islam as a liberating and moral force. Quoting from Sura Hud, 87, and Sura An-Nisa, 113, Ratna Sari argued that Islam was fundamentally invested in "improving the fate of humanity" (*memperbaiki nasib manusia*), while also reforming human behavior to incline it toward righteousness.[114]

Ratna Sari even proclaimed that Islam was no enemy to other creeds and religions because Islam brought freedom, including "freedom of thought" (*kemerdekaan berfikir*).[115] She argued that the only limitation on this freedom of thought was when public peace was threatened, citing Sura al-An'am, 108. This was a conceptualization of Islam as fundamentally rational, progressive, and cosmopolitan: in its applied form, it constituted a means for ordering a compassionate society that was something more than just the rule of the strong over the weak, or the scrabble for material wealth and power. With its emphasis on *akal*, freedom, revolution, and progress, this was a vision of Islam that lent itself to the absorption of socialist ideas just as much as women's rights activism.

Permi's relationship with socialism emerged most explicitly in a slim pamphlet titled *Tabligh Oemoem* (1930), which was clearly meant to be circulated among members and potential recruits. *Tabligh Oemoem* translates roughly into "the public propagation of faith," and the term *tabligh* has specifically proselytizing connotations, often taking the form of a public or private meeting in which attendees are exhorted to Islamic orthopraxy.[116] Consistent with its title, this pamphlet functioned less as a didactic text than a devotional one; it was presented as if the reader was actually attending a *tabligh* meeting, opening with the full suite of Islamic greetings and the confession of faith, and ending with a recitation of Sura al-Fatihah, the opening Sura of

[113] Ibid., 11.
[114] Ibid., 18.
[115] Ibid., 14.
[116] "Tabligh," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito. Oxford Islamic Studies Online, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2295 (accessed December 13, 2019).

the Qur'an.[117] It reads almost like a Christian order of service, or a Sufi *wird*, as if a social and pedagogical experience had been crystallized in print form, so that one might carry that experience in one's pocket and be edified by it repeatedly. The pamphlet was organized in three parts: the first section was historical, dealing with the basics of the Islamic faith and its early history. The second section was "Islam with Progress" (Islam dengan Kemadjoean), dominated by justifications from jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*), which explained why Islam was not inimical to progress/change. Much like Ratna Sari's speeches, the language of "progress" saturated this section.[118] The third and final segment was revealingly titled "Socialism in Islam" (Socialisme dalam Islam).[119]

This final segment related a speech given at an actual *tabligh* meeting by one M. Ali Tholib Siregar. Siregar's argument was straightforward, and closely mirrored Tjokroaminoto's in *Islam and Socialism* (1924). Siregar claimed that Islam was, in fact, socialism. For him, the principles of socialism were inherent in Islam, not in the various European formulations of socialism: "true socialism" (*socialisme sedjati*) was "Islamic socialism, not the socialism of the West."[120] Specifically, he identified the principles promoted by socialism as "the unity of mankind," and "the obligation to ensure each other's welfare" (*wajiblah kita mentjapai keselamatan bagi mereka semoeanja*), among others.[121] Siregar argued that these principles were congruent with Islamic goals, such "the establishment of a just government," and "the implementation of Islam necessarily means promoting harmony and peace."[122] A number of hadith and Qur'anic verses were quoted to support these assertions, although specific references were not provided. This was not merely an assertion of Islamic moral superiority over European decadence. It was a call to action consistent with the ethos of *tabligh*; Siregar readily admitted that "our social realities have strayed far from what the Qur'an teaches, for both men and women."[123]

Permi was openly engaging with socialism during a time when Marxist ideas were bound to attract the attention of the colonial police. This was

[117] Permi, *Tabligh Oemoem* (Medan: Badan Perwakilan Dewan Penjiaran dan Pertahanan Islam Permi, 1930), 1, 19.
[118] Ibid., 13–16.
[119] Ibid., 16–18.
[120] Ibid., 18.
[121] Ibid., 17.
[122] Ibid., 18–19.
[123] Ibid., 17.

not the explicit Islamic Communism of Nathar Zainuddin and Haji Datuk Batuah, or the Pendidikan's engagement with Marx, but it was a one among many outgrowths of Sarekat Islam's entanglement with Marxism in the 1920s. Permi's newspapers and pamphlets expressed solidarity with anti-imperial movements in the Middle East and Asia as well as with Marxist movements in Europe and America, seeking to learn from their collective experiences. At the same time, an Islamic ethical framework pervaded Permi's discourse, and sometimes Marxist ideas were rendered in an Islamic idiom. Permi had no qualms about embracing the label "socialist," albeit on its own terms. Permi members recognized that Marxism was not a comprehensive dogma; rather, Marxism provided valuable insights for understanding the world and its injustices. They incorporated these insights into their own struggle, on their own terms, and this struggle was framed in nationalistic and Islamic terms as much as it was in the terms of class struggle.

The Diniyyah Schools' Alumni

The PSII in Java and Permi in West Sumatra were not the only organizations to embrace a dynamic Islamic modernism that facilitated the adaptation of political ideas from outside the Indies. Operating outside of explicitly political movements during the 1930s, Islamic schools such as the Diniyyah schools of West Sumatra trained many students who would go on to join Hatta's and Sjahrir's Pendidikan, and later Sjahrir's Socialist Party of Indonesia (PSI) as well. If we trace a prosopography of the Dinyyah schools' alumni, the organic connections between Islamic education and socialist politics in West Sumatra become evident. The progressive ethos embraced by modernist Islamic educational institutions were part of the conditions of possibility for Islam and socialism to engage productively.

Like the Sumatra Thawalib schools that preceded them, the Diniyyah schools were remarkably open to Marxist ideas. This did not manifest, however, in terms of the explicit Islamic Communism preached by Haji Datuk Batuah and Nathar Zainuddin. The Diniyyah schools were founded in 1923 by the siblings Zainuddin Labai al-Junusy and Rahmah el-Junusiyyah. Zainuddin, originally a teacher at the most radical Sumatra Thawalib school in Padang Panjang, left in 1915 to found his own modernist Islamic school, the Diniyyah school. Initially a coeducational institution, the Diniyyah school grew in influence, and Zainuddin's sister Rahmah established a

women's school, the Diniyyah Putri, in 1923. Zainuddin died in 1924, and the two schools merged in 1932.[124] While both schools were ostensibly apolitical in their curriculum, their students were not barred from privately engaging in political activity.[125] They were certainly avid consumers of pergerakan discourse: a Diniyyah Putri yearbook celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of its founding (1938) included advertisements for *Pandji Islam* and *Pedoman Masjarakat*, which regularly published articles by leading pergerakan activists-in-exile such as Soekarno, Hatta, and Rasuna Said.[126] Djoeir Moehamad of the PSI recalled reading these newspapers with the Pendidikan's Leon Salim and Chatib Suleiman while he was a Diniyyah student during the 1930s, and eventually became a contributor himself.[127]

Large numbers of Sumatra Thawalib students took classes at the Diniyah schools as well, usually in the afternoons after their Sumatra Thawalib lessons ended. Among these students was Leon Salim, a key Pendidikan leader of the 1930s and the Japanese occupation. Much like the Darwis Thaib, who was a ranking member of both Permi and the Pendidikan, Leon Salim saw no contradiction in being both a member of the Pendidikan and the Persatoean Moerid Diniyah School (Union of Diniyyah School Students, PMDS, of which Leon Salim was chairman).[128] Djoeir Moehamad, Pendidikan activist and later a member of Sjahrir's PSI, was among the Diniyyah schools' many pupils as well.[129]

A festschrift published in honor of Zainuddin Labai el-Junusiyyah and Rahmah el-Junusiyyah in 1991 reveals the ways in which Marxist ideas and Islamic identity could coexist among Diniyyah students. Leon Salim and Djoeir Moehamad, who both went on to become avowed socialists

[124] Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 81.

[125] Unlike his teacher, Haji Rasul (Hamka's father), and his peers (such as Haji Datuk Batuah and Djamaluddin Tamin), Zainuddin Labai el-Junisiyyah neither overtly rejected nor sanctioned Communism. He chose a different path, one that would empower his students to make their own political decisions. See Hamka, *Ajahku*, 132.

[126] *Peringatan 55 Tahun Diniyah Putri Padang Panjang* (Padang: Ghalia Indonesia, 1978), 303.

[127] Djoeir Moehamad, *Memoar Seorang Sosialis* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1997), 55, 58. Chatib Suleiman was one of the three top Pendidikan leaders in West Sumatra, alongside Darwis Thaib and Tamimi Osman. A close associate of Leon Salim, he helped Leon Salim found the Islamic scouting organization el-Hilaal, and went on to teach at various modernist Islamic schools in West Sumatra. He joined the Pendidikan in 1932.

[128] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 99. In 1991, Leon Salim was using the title "Haji" to preface his name in publications, which suggests that his Muslim faith was a consistent one that deepened over time, despite his long association with the Pendidikan and Sjahrir's Socialist Party of Indonesia. Darwis Thaib was one of the three members of Permi's leadership training committee, which also included Permi's foremost leader, Iljas Jacoub. Moreover, Darwis Thaib regularly contributed articles to Permi's newspaper, *Medan Ra'jat*.

[129] Djoeir Moehamad, *Memoar Seorang Sosialis*, 55.

in adulthood, each contributed a chapter reminiscing on their time in the Diniyyah schools.[130] Leon Salim began by celebrating the matrilineal structure of Minangkabau society, even as he proclaimed the Minangkabau to be a people especially steeped in Islam.[131] This is interesting, because the matrilineal bent of Minangkabau culture had been a matter of some consternation for the *kaum muda*. Minangkabau social norms were often at odds with the norms of patrilineal inheritance espoused by all four schools of jurisprudence, including the Shafi'i *madhhab* dominant in the Indies.[132] Unlike many *kaum muda* scholars, Leon Salim understood Islam to be a religion that "held women in high honor and strengthened Minangkabau traditions [*adat*]."[133] He even described the Minangkabau as "fanatics for *adat*" and "diligent in religion" in the same sentence.[134] To Leon Salim, Minangkabau society was special, one capable of sublimating opposing impulses.

Leon Salim's chapter was couched in the language of Islamic piety, constantly invoking God's blessing and praising Rahmah el-Junusiyyah for her commitment to educating good Muslims. His writing took on an apologetic, abrasive tone at times, as Leon Salim vigorously defended Rahmah el-Junusiyyah from accusations of building a cult of personality. Both Zainuddin and Rahmah explicitly maintained an apolitical stance in their curricula and pedagogy. However, Leon Salim remarked that the "anticolonial spirit [*jiwa anti penjajahan*] flowed through her veins," and praised Rahmah for refusing to accept colonial funding. He was particularly impressed by her insistence on accepting only teachers and students who were prepared to "tighten their belts for the sake of their principles."[135]

Interestingly, this Islamic ethos of self-sacrifice that Rahmah el-Junusiyyah supposedly embodied was positioned by Leon Salim within a hybrid pedagogical lineage that included known Marxists. Leon Salim explicitly placed the Diniyyah Putri school within a long line of nationalist educational initiatives, namely "Ki Hadjar Dewantara (Taman Siswa), K. H. Ahmad Dahlan (Muhammadiyah), Tan Malaka (Rakyat School),

[130] Leon Salim, "Rahmah El Yunusiyah Satria Wanita RI Alam Minang," and Djoeir Moehamad, "Mengenang Kak Amah dan Diniyyahnya," in *Zainuddin Labay El Yunusy Dan Hajjah Rahmah El Yunusiyyah: Dua Bersaudara Tokoh Pembaru Sistem Pendidikan Di Indonesia, Riwayat Hidup, Cita-Cita, Dan Perjuangannya* (Jakarta: Pengurus Perguruan Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang, 1991), 125–35, 141–44.

[131] Leon Salim, "Rahmah El Yunusiyah Satria Wanita RI Alam Minang," 125.

[132] Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, 58–61.

[133] Leon Salim, "Rahmah El Yunusiyah Satria Wanita RI Alam Minang," 125.

[134] Ibid., 128.

[135] Ibid., 131.

Cokrominoto (Perguruan SI), K. H. Hasym Ashari (Nahdlatul Ulama), Zainuddin Labay El Yunusy (Diniyyah school), Dr. H. A. Karim Amrullah (Madrasah Thawalib), and many others in Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi."[136] These schools, he claimed, "educated their students with a holy and pure idealism, teaching them to stand on their own feet and believe in their own abilities, while rejecting the individualism and materialism inculcated by colonial education."[137] Strikingly, Leon Salim located the Diniyyah schools within the same lineage as the Sekolah Rakyat (People's Schools) supported by the Communist Tan Malaka and the Islamic socialist Tjokroaminoto. The Sumatra Thawalib schools, which harbored significant numbers of Islamic Communist students and teachers, were also included in this category, alongside the many overtly apolitical Islamist modernist schools of the Muhammadiyah (which did accept colonial funding and used the Dutch curriculum for non-Islamic subjects). These connections are not entirely surprising, since students often attended either the Sumatra Thawalib or Sekolah Rakyat during the day, and then one of the Diniyyah schools in the evening.[138] Leon Salim's positioning of the Dinyyah schools in a broader field of pergerakan educational initiatives speaks to how comfortably Islam and Marxism could coexist. Leon Salim himself was a practicing Muslim who maintained connections to Tan Malaka's PARI, via Djamaluddin Tamin, throughout the 1930s.[139] The 1930s West Sumatran milieu embraced the possibility of finding generative, productive confluences between the old and new. In this milieu, it was possible for pergerakan activists to be both Muslim and socialist; the older Leon Salim, writing in the twilight of his life, still found those eclectic combinations inspiring rather than confounding.

Islamic Communist ideas also circulated among Dinyyah students. Leon Salim recalled that explicitly Islamic Communist newspapers like *Djago! Djago!* and *Pemandangan Islam* were widely read by the students of both the Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah schools during the early 1920s. He even claimed that "nearly all of the ulama [religious teachers] became leaders in the Sarekat Rakyat or the PKI."[140] While this was almost certainly

[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid., 132.
[138] Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 40. The Sekolah Rakyat in West Sumatra had been set up in 1924 specifically because of the arrest of radical Sumatra Thawalib teachers and students (including Nathar Zainuddin and Haji Datuk Batuah) in the same year.
[139] Shiraishi, *The Phantom World of Digul*, 261.
[140] Salim, "Gerakan Pemuda / Kepanduan Sekitar Diniyah School," 233.

an exaggeration, these modernist Islamic schools were clearly a receptive environment for many different strains of political thought, and the confluence of Islam and Marxism was one among many discursive threads that shaped pergerakan activism. Leon Salim described the 1926–27 uprisings as "revolutionary Islam in the dress of the Sarekat Rakyat (PKI)," implying that the uprisings retained a fundamentally Islamic impetus.[141] Even after the suppression of the 1926–27 uprisings, Islamic Communism was not quite discredited: Leon Salim recalled that the Diniyyah schools' student union (PMDS), of which he was chairman, continued to stay in touch with former teachers like Djamaluddin Tamin and Djamaluddin Ibrahim. Both were Tan Malaka's lieutenants, then living in Singapore to avoid capture by the Dutch.[142] It was from them that Leon Salim obtained organizational manuals for the scouting movements he was involved in, the PKI-affiliated Internationale Pavinder Organasatie (IPO, International Scouting Organization) and the Islamic El Hilaal.[143] This was not unprecedented. Leon Slaim's mentor Djamluddin Tamin had previously evinced the same willingness to combine Islamic faith with Marxist convictions, publishing several articles in the Islamic modernist newspaper *al-Munir*, printed in Padang Panjang from 1918 to 1921.[144]

Leon Salim's fellow Diniyyah alumnus Djoeir Moehamad also combined Islamic identity and socialist politics. While not as highly placed as Leon Salim, he was a trusted member of Sjahrir's PSI in the 1950s, and was delegated by Hatta to negotiate with the PRRI/Permesta movement (1958–61) during the confrontation between the Masjumi-backed PRRI and the central government.[145] Djoeir Moehamad was likely chosen because of he had previously taught at one of Rahmah el-Junusiyyah's Islamic schools (Kulliyatul Muallimin/Muallimat) in Padang Panjang, and his Islamic credentials made him a suitable envoy to the Masjumi leaders of the PRRI.[146] Djoeir Moehamad was clear about his political commitments: his 1997 autobiography was unambiguously titled *Memoirs of a Socialist*. In his festschrift chapter, he spoke glowingly of the kind of education Rahmah el-Junusiyyah

[141] Ibid., 237.
[142] Ibid., 238. Djamaluddin Tamin was also one of the founding editors of *Djago! Djago!* and *Pemandangan Islam*, the explicitly Islamic Communist newspapers examined in chapter 1.
[143] Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 58.
[144] Ibid., 63.
[145] Djoeir Moehamad, *Memoar Seorang Sosialis*, 255–61.
[146] Ibid., 51.

oversaw, claiming that she gave her staff the utmost flexibility to teach as they saw fit, with the result that the students received "a pure and complete Islamic education."[147] This was, according to him, a "moderate" education that "departed from conservative, staid education to raise the caliber of students' understanding, such that they might participate in the development of a progressive society [*masyarakat yang maju*]."[148]

Corroborating Leon Salim, Djoeir Moehamad acknowledged that Rahmah el-Junusiyyah did not play an active political role in the pergerakan, but maintained that she emanated the "noncooperative, anticolonial spirit."[149] He contrasted Rahmah el-Junusiyyah's disavowal of overt political activism with Rasuna Said and S. K. Trimurti (teacher, journalist, unionist, and first labor minister of the Indonesian republic). For Djoeir Moehamad, the "active" female pergerakan activists like Rasuna Said and S. K. Trimurti were "models of civic virtue, and worthy of emulation."[150] However, he also took pains to point out that the independent (*mandiri*) pedagogy of Rahmah el-Junusiyyah contributed in its own subtle way to the development and maturity of the pergerakan. Even for an avowed socialist like Djoeir Moehamad, Islam could be a source of progressive discourse, and an Islamic education a productive molding of character, in a way that was synchronous with his socialist creed. It is clear from his tone that he did not perceive Islamic education as a mere transitional phase in the maturation of the pergerakan or a steppingstone to a more "developed" society; he perceived intrinsic value in his Islamic education and recognized how it had helped shape his own commitment to socialism. It is worth pointing out that these were more than wistful reminiscences, for participation in Islamic education had concrete effects. Djoeir Moehamad wrote that it was during his stint teaching at the Kulliyatul Mualimin that he met Leon Salim and Chatib Suleiman of the Pendidikan, another example of how often socialist and Islamic circles easily overlapped in West Sumatra.[151]

Djoeir Moehamad's memoirs illustrate an eclectic West Sumatran environment in which Islam and Marxism regularly intersected, not just in the

[147] Djoeir M, "Mengenang Kak Amah dan Diniyyahnya," in *Zainuddin Labay El Yunusy dan Hajjah Rahmah El Yunusiyyah: Dua Bersaudara Tokoh Pembaru Sistem Pendidikan di Indonesia, Riwayat Hidup, Cita-cita, dan Perjuangannya* (Jakarta: Pengurus Perguruan Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang, 1991), 141.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid., 142.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid.

Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah schools. Born in 1916, Djoeir describes growing up in a typical Minangkabau environment: most boys of his generation received at least a basic traditional Islamic education in a *surau*, memorizing the Qur'an and learning Arabic. Many of these same boys that he attended *surau* with, however, were also attracted to leftist activism. His classmates Baizar Ahmad and Bahar went on to become union leaders in Singapore, eventually introducing him to the PKI leader Alimin in 1946.[152] Similarly, Djohan Noer, another classmate from his *surau*, became closely associated with Chairul Saleh, one of Tan Malaka's lieutenants and a prominent militia leader during the revolution.[153] At the same time, Djoeir Moehamad's family was very much immersed in the *kampung* (village) life of *adat* and Islam (his father was a *silat* master as well as a practitioner of *kebatinan*), and understood themselves to be "existing on the margins" of colonial society.[154] Djoeir Moehamad's father saw no need to enroll him in Dutch schools. Despite coming from a nonelite, nonurban, and distinctly traditional Islamic background, Djoeir Moehamad still ended up as a committed socialist.

In the 1930s Djoeir Moehamad was enamored of the writings and speeches of Hatta and Sjahrir, reading the Pendidikian newspaper *Daulat Ra'jat* when he could. He wrote glowingly of his first opportunity to meet Hatta when he was sixteen, in October 1932, upon Hatta's return from Holland.[155] At the same time, he was a member of a Muslim scouting movement, the Hizbul Wathan. Like Leon Salim, he saw no contradiction between the Marxist ideas Pendidikan newspapers exposed him to and his Islamic identity.[156] He also wrote admiringly of Permi in his autobiography, acknowledging Permi as an example of a "radical Islamic party" (*partai Islam radikal*).[157] Djoeir recalled that Padang Panjang was a center of pergerakan activity of a more Islamic bent, but simultaneously constituted "the foundation for political cadre formation" (*lembaga pengkaderan politik*), implying that pergerakan organizations like the Pendidikan and the various Islamic movements were mutually constitutive.[158] It was during his time teaching at the Kulliyatul Muallimat, Rahmah el-Junusiyyah's Islamic school in Padang Panjang, that he joined the Pendidikan himself.[159]

[152] Djoeir Moehamad, *Memoar Seorang Sosialis*, 17.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid., 25.
[155] Ibid., 29.
[156] Ibid., 30–31.
[157] Ibid., 51.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid., 55.

Djoeir Moehamad located Islamic and Marxist organizations in the same field of activism. He specifically mentioned the Pendidikan, PKI, Permi, Muhammadiyah, and Taman Siswa, among others, as influences on Islamic modernism in West Sumatra.[160] More pointedly, Djoeir argued that the West Sumatran pergerakan was unambiguously influenced by Marxism, in the form of the "radical political nationalist stream" (*aliran politik nasionalisme radikal*) represented by Tan Malaka, but "without being beholden to Comintern influence."[161]

Djoeir Moehamad's political commitments were not frivolous, and he remained a Pendidikan member even after Hatta and Sjahrir were exiled in the 1930s. He was close to Chatib Suleiman during the late 1930s, describing himself as one of several cadres still studying old issues of *Daulat Ra'jat* and Pendidikan brochures (such as *150 Questions and Answers*) under Chatib Suleiman's supervision.[162] He even recalled that Chatib Suleiman, one of the top three West Sumatran Pendidikan leaders in Hatta's and Sjahrir's absence, moved easily in various circles in Minangkabau society, including those of the religious scholars, students, and even *preman* (gangsters).[163] He did not see any contradiction between the Pendidikan's socialism and his own Islamic identity, continuing to contributes articles to Islamic newspapers like *Pandji Islam* and *Pedoman Masjarakat* throughout the 1930s.[164]

Besides Leon Salim and Djoeir Moehamad, the Diniyyah schools incubated many other pergerakan activists who blended their Islamic faith with leftist politics. Djamaluddin Tamin taught at both the Sumatra Thawalib and the Diniyyah schools in Padang Panjang in the early 1920s.[165] Tamin and Haji Datuk Batuah were two of (Hamka's father) Haji Rasul's most gifted students, whose modernist Islamic school (the Surau Djembatan Besi) would become the first Sumatra Thawalib school in Padang Panjang. Tamin eventually became Tan Malaka's right-hand man, following him into exile in 1926. He put the editorial skills he had picked up while helping Haji Datuk Batuah edit *Pemandangan Islam* to good use, by publishing the clandestine newspaper *Obor* (lit. torch) from exile during the 1930s.[166] The attraction of Muslim students to leftist politics was typical of the time and place;

[160] Ibid., 56.
[161] Ibid., 57.
[162] Ibid., 59.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid., 50–58.
[165] Latief, "Putri Islam Bangun dan Bangkit," 225.
[166] Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 38.

Tamin's brother and fellow Diniyyah student Jazir became chairman of the Pendidikan's Padang Panjang section in the early 1930s, while Djamluddin Ibrahim (another of Tan Malaka's lieutenants) was the younger brother of Hatta's close associate, Anwar Sutan Saidi.[167] Audrey Kahin argues that there was no inconsistency in following both Hatta/Sjahrir and Tan Malaka in the 1930s, since all were open to Marxism, anticolonial, emphasized cadre organization, and did not take orders from Moscow.[168]

The Diniyyah teacher Djamaluddin Ibrahim was similarly drawn to Tan Malaka. Djamaluddin Ibrahim and others like him discovered Communism via their involvement in the PKI-linked scouting organization Barisan Muda (Young Cohorts), which was reorganized as the Internationale Pavinder Organasatie (IPO) in 1925.[169] He eventually became the editor of the IPO journal *Signaal*. Incidentally, Leon Salim had been a member of the Barisan Muda/IPO while enrolled at both the Sekolah Rakyat and the Diniyyah schools in Padang Panjang during the early 1920s, and had even organized his own Islamic-oriented scouting movement, El Hilaal (Crescent Moon) in 1927 along similar lines.[170] As an adult, Djamaluddin Ibrahim served as the Diniyyah schools' secretary from 1937 to 1942, having previously spent 1930–31 working with Tan Malaka's PARI in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.[171] Even while overseas, he maintained strong links with Diniyyah students, sending clandestine copies of PARI's newspaper *Obor* as well as manuals on scouting organization to PMDS leaders.[172] More broadly, PARI's network of supporters and sympathizers in Singapore and West Sumatra was strongly connected to Sumatra Thawalib alumni via Djamaluddin Tamin, and strongly influenced the development of key Pendidikan members like Leon Salim and Darwis Thaib.[173]

These activists' intersecting personal relationships, overlapping political allegiances, and shared commitment to Islam are indicative of a social milieu in which it was commonplace, though not uncontroversial, for Islam and Marxism to coexist.[174] This was true even beyond the Diniyyah schools: Leon Salim wrote that the headmaster of the influential Abadiah

[167] Audrey Kahin (trans.), "Translator's Preface," in Leon Salim, *Prisoners at Kota Cane* (Jakarta: Equinox, 2010), 21.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 41.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Kahin, "Translator's Preface,"19.
[172] Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 58.
[173] Shiraishi, *The Phantom World of Digul*, 139–43.
[174] Haji Rasul quit the school he founded over this very issue. See Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 38.

Islamic school in Padang Panjang, Abdullah Ahmad, had been a clandestine supporter of Tan Malaka all his adult life.[175] More broadly, Shiraishi points out that overlapping networks of pergerakan activists read similar literature and shared ideas even if some—like Parindra and Gerindo—were willing participate in colonial politics via the Volksraad, while others chose the underground (like Tan Malaka's PARI and Musso's PKI Muda).[176] A clean distinction between "Marxist" and "non-Marxist" individuals and organizations is not meaningful in this context. The pergerakan activists examined in this section were all connected to the Diniyyah schools, either as teachers or students, and they freely engaged with Marxist ideas or Marxist organizations without abandoning their Islamic faith. For them, the progressive ethos of West Sumatran modernist Islamic education was a deeply formative experience that made possible new political identities and novel forms of political activism.

The Avant-Garde: *Kritiek en Opbouw*

Outside of political movements both proscribed and legal, socialist ideas with identifiably Marxist roots also circulated among the Indies literati during the 1930s.[177] This was evident in the Indies equivalent of salon culture, centered around the person of Edgar "Eddy" du Perron (1899–1940).[178] It was in such circles that Marxist ideas were debated, even as many participants in these debates held on to their Muslim identities, and sometimes raised issues of specifically Muslim concern. *Kritiek en Opbouw* (Criticism and Construction) was the Dutch-language journal most closely associated with the socialist avant-garde in the Indies. It attracted articles from both native and Dutch contributors and was notable for the number of articles contributed by erudite native women like Soewarsih Djojopoespito and Maria Ulfah Santoso (see Figure 2.1). In the pages of *Kritiek en Opbouw*, socialist ideas and issues of specifically Muslim concern coexisted alongside feminist arguments for

[175] Salim, *Prisoners at Kota Cane*, 35; Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900–1942*, 38–39. The Abadiah school was a modernist Islamic institution founded in 1909, but one that was more congenial to the colonial state: it faithfully followed the Dutch Holland Inlandsch School (HIS) curriculum, with the addition of Qur'anic studies. Even in such places Tan Malaka had allies; Abdullah was close to Anwar Sutan Saidi, a known associate of both Hatta and Tan Malaka.

[176] Shiraishi, *The Phantom World of Digul*, 245.

[177] Special thanks are due to Dr. Klaas Stutje, who assisted with translations in this section.

[178] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 163–98.

the expansion of women's rights. In translating the intellectual heritage of Europe to Indonesia, strenuous attempts were made to learn selectively from Europe, while retaining—and cultivating—an authentically Indonesian subjectivity. For many contributors, that authentically Indonesian subjectivity included acceptance of Islam and its role in Indonesian society.

Kritiek en Opbouw's reliance on Marxist critiques of capital was not hard to spot. Articles such as "In de Marge—De koloniale verhouding" (In the Margins—the Colonial Reaction) expressed incredulity at Dutch parliamentarians' claims that a colonial relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia had ceased to exist in 1926. It spelled out the economic dependence of the Indies on the Netherlands within a Marxist framework:

> Economically, the Indies is in a coercive relationship [with the Netherlands]; it is a debtor country and a financial asset [*debiteurenland*, lit. an area of profit] for foreign, mostly Dutch, capital, to which it owes an annual "tribute" of hundreds of millions of guilders on average. The situation was correctly characterized by the notary S. Oppenkamp as such: Indies labor does not attract foreign capital to increase its return on investment, but rather it is foreign capital that attracts Indies labor to increase its own return on investment, its share of capital. Indies labor does not benefit from foreign capital, but foreign capital benefits from Indies labor. . . . This inhibits the chances for indigenous society to develop independently. Practically speaking, the population of the Indies today, with all the capital it has been allocated [by the Dutch state and private investors], does not receive more [capital] than it can produce with its own hands and primitive tools. Indonesia is a nation of wage laborers, and a wage laborer among the nations. It is this relationship that is characteristic of colonial relations.[179]

The articles in *Kritiek en Opbouw* were not limited to theoretical abstractions, but also addressed concrete issues of socialist concern. Such matters included how public sector salaries were assessed, and how government calls for plantations to raise postdepression wages for their employees were toothless, which justified organized labor action.[180] This article even drew explicitly on Marx's Immiseration Thesis (*verelendungstheorie*) to argue that real wages had not risen in value, although the value created by Indonesian labor

[179] M. Soetardjo, "In de Marge—De Koloniale Verhouding," *Kritiek en Opbouw*, March 16, 1938.
[180] D. M. G. Koch, "Loonbepaling—De Beteekenis van de Georganiseerde Loonactie," *Kritiek en Opbouw*, April 1, 1938.

had, in the years since the Great Depression.[181] It also provided updates on developments within the Communist Party of the Netherlands, which held four seats in the lower house of parliament after 1933, including one by Rustam Effendi.[182] At the same time, *Kritiek en Opbouw* was clear-eyed about the subordination of the Comintern to the USSR's prerogatives. It quoted the historian E. H. Carr's pejorative description of the Comintern under Stalin's thumb: "She is the specter of the world revolution, haunting indecisively around the tomb of Lenin on Red Square."[183] Without aligning itself with Trotsky or Tan Malaka, or engaging in the Marxist polemics that were typical of the era, *Kritiek en Opbouw* expressed the kind of critical socialism that was comfortable drawing on Marx's ideas but remained firmly rooted in the socioeconomic realities of the Indies.

Female pergerakan intellectuals such as Soewarsih Djojopoespito also contributed articles to *Kritiek en Opbouw*, engaging in debates with other equally literate women like Maria Ulfah Santoso on the issue of women's suffrage. They were both of excellent pedigree: in 1940, Soewarsih would become the first and only native woman to publish a Dutch-language novel, *Buiten het Gareel*, while the Leiden-trained lawyer Maria Ulfah Santoso would become the republic's first female cabinet member in 1946, serving as social minister under Sjahrir. Soewarsih argued that *kota* (urban) women like herself needed to be conscious of their own privilege, recognizing that they did not represent the voices and interests of *desa* (village) women, nor even share their worldviews. Shackled by childbirth and domestic labor, *desa* women did not yet have political consciousness, while *kota* women were consumed with imitating their European counterparts in manners and style. Soewarsih implied this unconscious worship of all things European clouded women's political judgment. She pointed out that female candidates for the Volksraad were bound to be screened, and only the most palatable—the least radical, the most inoffensive—candidates would be shortlisted. An overwhelmingly male-dominated electorate would then elect them. Without the votes of their fellow women, and without being able to represent the masses of village women, Soewarsih asked, how could electing women to the Volksraad be considered progress? Instead, she advocated investment in education and

[181] Ibid. For Marx's Immiseration Thesis, see Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1, part 2 (New York: Cosimo, 2007), 708–9.
[182] Koch, "Loonbepaling—De Beteekenis van de Georganiseerde Loonactie."
[183] M. Soetardjo, "In de Marge—De Koloniale Verhouding," *Kritiek en Opbouw*, March 16, 1938.

the expansion of women's rights activism, reaching into the villages, to "wake up the unconscious mass of *desa* women from her life-dream."[184]

Soewarsih also lamented the deradicalization of women's rights activism. She argued that unspecified "radical political parties"—most likely Permi, PKI, and PNI—had stirred up women's desire for equality, galvanizing women to campaign against polygyny. According to Soewarsih, "The women *demanded*, and begged no more! They took the suffragettes as an example, the most furious feminists, to act [and not merely speak]!"[185] Sadly, the campaign was "short and flaring" and fizzled out when radical parties were suppressed.[186] Female activists went back to accepting traditional gender roles as mothers, housekeepers, and spouses, feeling good about their vocal activism but having achieved nothing of substance. Soewarsih's esteem for "radical parties" and the suffragette movement, as well as her feminist convictions, were openly expressed in a journal with undeniably Marxist inspirations. At the same time, her acceptance of Islam's role in Indonesian society, and her desire to learn from other Islamic societies alongside European ones, were manifest in other articles she penned.

In a 1938 article titled "Our Muslim Sisters in and outside Indonesia," Soewarsih expressed her deep sympathy and respect for the incipient women's rights movement in the Middle East, which she identified as worthy of emulation precisely because Indonesia was a Muslim society as well.[187] In Soewarsih's words,

> Modern global transportation brought close contact between East and West. Ships moved around and left behind material and spiritual values. Telephone and telegraph informed Asia about the rapid progress of modern technique and changes in societal circumstances. . . . And the doors of the harems had to collapse in the storm of modern ideas. Muslim girls went to universities. They received responsible positions in offices.

[184] Soewarsih Djojopoespito, "De Indonesische vrouw en het passief kiesrecht," *Kritiek en Opbouw*, April 16, 1938.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.
[187] One example of Islamic feminist activism from this period was Hoda Shaarawi's Egyptian Feminist Union (EFU), founded in 1923. It made international headlines across the Islamic world when its leaders publicly discarded their veils. The EFU's journals, *L'Egyptienne* and *el-Masreyyah*, were notable for their calls to ban polygyny and equalize women's rights to divorce; at the same time, they specifically identified with Islam, positioning their feminism as Islam being practiced in its true spirit. See Cathlyn Mariscotti, *Gender and Class in the Egyptian Women's Movement, 1925–1939: Changing Perspective* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 93–100.

> Their voices resounded in meeting rooms. Women edited periodicals. Novelists and poets announced the new life of women. Frank and free, they enjoyed life and remembered the years long past with horror. High they raised the banner of freedom and pulverized tradition under their hasty steps . . . Indonesia is a Muslim country as well. And what is the situation of women here? Cloistered in age-old traditions and bewitched by Qur'anic verses of the orthodox, they only utter a trembling whisper.[188]

Soewarsih qualified her enthusiasm by arguing that this emulation had to go beyond the gathering of elite women to demand reforms in personal status law, women's suffrage, educational opportunities for women, and the reduction of prostitution. She provided a searing indictment of the Third Indonesian Women's Congress in 1938, which she had participated in:

> They [participants] addressed the reality around marriages, but did not dare to go beyond seeking the protection of the government (a government of men!) for better marriage laws and pleading for ulama to interpret the Qur'an in a modern way. They recognized that injustice and oppression, prostitution and polygamy are rooted in economic dependence of women, but they didn't dare to fly high. They remained nailed to the ground of reality and did not dare to go beyond the limits of what was possible. They begged for more girl's schools and for firm action of the moral police.[189]

Instead, she called on her fellow activists to focus on building support for women's rights among village women, helping to improve their lived realities, arguing that this was the only way to liquidate "man-society," and to give birth to a "human society," an objective she called a "holy ideal."[190] This was feminism articulated within a distinctly Islamic worldview, though not an argument for women's rights legitimated by Islamic hermeneutics, as evinced in S. Yati's writings. Islam was part of the picture, for Soewarsih, not the totality of it. Nevertheless, this engagement with Islam was remarkable coming from a feminist who drew on Friedrich Schiller, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Engels

[188] Soewarsih Djojopoespito, "Onze Muslimzusters in en buiten Indonesië," *Kritiek en Opbouw*, November 1, 1938.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Ibid.

in her other articles, and who praised the USSR for its success in improving women's livelihoods and thereby limiting prostitution.[191]

Naturally, not all Indonesian women's activists agreed with Soewarsih. Maria Ulfah Santoso, the first Indonesian woman to graduate from Leiden University with a *meester in de rechten* (master of laws) degree in 1933, chaired the 1938 conference and published an acerbic article rebutting Soewarsih's criticism of elite Indonesian feminists. In brief, Maria Ulfah Santoso argued that Soewarsih's characterization of the draft ordinance on marriage reform was unfair, and that genuine problems existed with the draft legislation that made it unpalatable to feminists.[192] She also objected violently to Soewarsih's critique of the elitist concerns of *kota* feminists, defending their focus on winning the right (for some women, at least) to stand as candidates in municipal councils and the Volksraad, as well as the right to vote in those elections. Her writing was steeped in religious sensibilities as well: "Enthusiasm and readiness to fight, thank God, we have in abundance."[193] At the same time, Maria Ulfah Santoso was open to redefining Islam, arguing in another article that the Qur'an did not intend to denigrate women, but the way Indonesian society interpreted Qur'anic principles had resulted in unequal rights to divorce for women, making life especially hard for victims of spousal abuse.[194] Santoso had worked as a teacher in a Muhammadiyah teacher-training college in Batavia after returning from Leiden, which provides some sense of her religious leanings. Her attachment to socialism was not in any doubt: besides publishing in *Kritiek en Opbouw*, her second husband, Soebadio Sastroasatomo, was a leading member of the Socialist Party of Indonesia (PSI). They married in 1964 and went on the hajj together in the 1970s.[195] In the lives and writings of Maria Ulfah Santoso, as with Soewarsih Djojopoespito, we catch glimpses of a lived reality, an umwelt, in which Islamic identity and socialist politics could mix easily and without the need for explicit justification.

Susan Blackburn provides a useful framework for understanding why a considerable number of educated and erudite Indonesian women like

[191] Soewarsih Djojopoespito, "De indonesische Vrouw van morgen," *Kritiek en Opbouw*, June 15, 1938.

[192] Maria Ulfah Santoso, "De Indonesische vrouw en het passief kiesrecht: Naar aanleiding van het stuk van Mevrouw Soerwarsih Djojopoespito," *Kritiek en Opbouw*, June 1, 1938.

[193] Ibid.

[194] Kurniawati Hastuti Dewi, "Javanese Women and Islam: Identity Formation since the Twentieth Century," *Southeast Asian Studies* 1 (April 2012): 120.

[195] George McTurnan Kahin, "In Memoriam: Maria Ullfah Soebadio, 1911–1988," *Indonesia* 47 (April 1989): 118–20.

Soewarsih embraced both their Islamic identities and Marxist critiques of capital. Blackburn argues that "radical Islam" had once been a "nationalist phenomenon," allowing and encouraging women to play a role in politics.[196] However, "Bright and articulate women were attracted to radical Islam when it was fighting for national independence, but now [after independence was achieved] few share its goals."[197] This preindependence attraction to radical politics and the doors it opened was evident in Djoeinah's writings and speeches, analyzed in chapter 1. In the colonial context, Islam provided a means (or framework) for mobilizing women in the interest of social justice, often in ways that directly impacted Indonesian women's lived realities.

Blackburn uses the example of Gerwani to support her argument: she argues that millions of women were attracted to participate in Gerwani activities not because of its Marxist inspirations, but because it offered practical solutions to their problems.[198] These solutions served the cause of social justice, and included literacy courses, childcare crèches, and campaigns against price hikes in staple goods. In a similar vein, women were attracted to Islamic (PSII, Permi) or Marxist (PKI, SR) organizations in the colonial era because they afforded them a rare opportunity and platform to speak against injustice both abstract and personal. They may not have been ulama or philosophers, but they participated in Islamic or Marxist organizations, or contributed to Islamic or Marxist publications, because these were the entities best placed and most willing to oppose the indignities of extractive colonial capitalism and confront gender roles constraining women. Women's activism in this period thrived in the interstices of feminism, Islam, and Marxism.

That said, it is also important to be clear-eyed about the limitations of the Indies women's rights movement. Lise Vogel's distinction between what she calls the "dual systems" approach and the "social reproduction" approach within Marxist theory, which provides a framework for understanding the causes of women's oppression, is germane here. Both the Islamic and socialist feminists examined in this chapter were very much attuned to the dual-systems approach that Vogel ascribes to Engels's *The Origin of the Family,*

[196] Blackburn, "Indonesian Women and Political Islam," 92.
[197] Ibid., 93.
[198] Gerwani (Gerakan Wanita Indonesia, Indonesian Women's Movement) was a PKI-affiliated women's rights organization founded as Gerwis in 1950. It claimed a membership of 1.5 million at its peak. Chapter 4 explores both organizations in further detail.

Private Property, and the State (1884), which posits that patriarchal social norms and class structures are two distinct, autonomous sources of women's oppression.[199] Female pergerakan activists like the sisters Soewarni and Soewarsih, or Permi's Rasuna Said and Ratna Sari, were invested in making tangible improvements to the daily lives of Indies women although they disagreed on how this ought to be done. One notable point of departure was the push for the outlawing of polygyny in 1937, which many Islamic women's organizations felt unable to support.

For all their differences, however, they were united by their inability or unwillingness to regard the organization of production and reproduction as mutually constitutive. As Vogel explains, this is the dialectic between the how production is organized in a capitalist society at any given historical moment, and how it affects the web of norms and conventions governing women's sexuality, the family unit, the raising of children, domestic labor, and women's participation in the workforce.[200] Instead, female pergerakan activists tended to view women's oppression and colonial structures of race and class as distinct, if parallel, processes. Some, like Soewarish, were more sensitive to the inequities of class and race, but others, like Ratna Sari, bypassed the colonial economy and appealed to notions of Islamic ethics and orthopraxy to justify a reconsideration of gender roles and exploitative practices. Either way, what they struggled for was the reformation of male behavior, societal expectations, and laws, as well as for more educational and professional opportunities for women. They were not militating specifically against the colonial capitalist modes of production that rendered women especially vulnerable to both sexual and economic exploitation. While influenced by Marxist critiques of capital and happy to use those critiques against the colonial state, they did not connect those ideas to their own women's rights activism; the two activities remained conceptually distinct. They sought the economic independence of women as a means of improving women's lives, but such economic independence was never going to be forthcoming in a society structured around the exploitative economic prerogatives of the colonial state.

[199] Lise Vogel, *Marxism and Oppression of Women: Towards a Unitary Theory* (Boston: Brill, 2013), 133–34.
[200] Ibid., 135.

Novels of the 1930s: *Buiten het Gareel* and *Hadji Dadjal*

The intensified surveillance faced by the pergerakan from the mid-1930s onward saw the arrest and exile of Soekarno, Sjahrir, and Hatta, the neutering of the Pendidikan, PSII, and Permi, and intensified censorship. In this repressive climate, it was increasingly difficult to publish anything openly critical of the colonial state. Fiction, however, remained a relatively unpoliced discursive realm, and fiction can reveal how Islam and Marxism remained in productive dialogue. This section examines two novels: Soewarsih Djojopoespito's *Buiten het Gareel* (1940) and Xarim M. S.'s *Hadji Dadjal* (1941). The former sheds light on the hybrid discourses circulating within pergerakan schools, while the latter, authored by a Minangkabau Islamic Communist, reveals new forms of Islamic piety that made possible the incorporation of Marxist ideas.

Soewarsih's *Buiten het Gareel* (1940) was the first Dutch-language novel to be published by a female Indonesian author. Soewarsih and her husband, Soegondo, had been associates of Sjahrir during his time in Bandung in the late 1920s, and later again when he returned from the Netherlands to lead the Pendidikan in 1932.[201] Though not formally members of the Pendidikan, Soewarsih and her husband moved in circles similar to Sjahrir's, and were themselves teachers in pergerakan schools during the late 1930s (including the Semarang Taman Siswa school of Ki Hadjar Dewantara) that rejected subsidies from the colonial state. Both were perceived by the colonial state as subversive activists, and Soegondo was subject to a teaching ban (*onderwijs verbod*) from 1934 to 1935.

Soewarsih's novel, which was explicitly concerned with the difficulties and joys of teaching at one of these *sekolah liar* (wild schools), provides a window into the intellectual ferment of the 1930s. *Buiten het Gareel* is primarily concerned with the dilemmas of pergerakan activism, particularly in education, during the 1930s.[202] A roman à clef set in the 1930s, it contained autobiographical elements and descriptions of real people under fictional names.[203] Soewarsih and Soegondo had been close to the swirl of pergerakan activity in Bandung during the late 1920s and early 1930s, and *Buiten het Gareel* is an attempt to evoke—through fiction—the atmosphere, excitement, and troubles of those days. Characters such as Marti are clearly refractions of real people

[201] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 83.
[202] Toeti Heraty, "Kata Pengantar," in *Manusia Bebas* (Jakarta: Djambatan, 1975), xvi.
[203] Sears, *Situated Testimonies*, 99.

(in this case, Soewarsih's sister Soewarni). While the novel should not be read as a direct reflection of reality, it is obviously meant to ring true, to capture the essence of a particular moment in time and space. On a more gendered note, it was also a story about the hardships and intimacies shared by a young activist couple; Soewarsih "investigates the limits of native women's desires and possibilities for emancipation in the intertwined spaces of personal and political life."[204]

It is important to establish that Soewarsih and Soegondo were important pergerakan activists in their own right—though primarily in the educational and literary spheres—apart from their relationships with key pergerakan leaders like Sjahrir. They were also familiar with Soekarno, whose firebrand agitation in the late 1920s and early 1930s was centered in Bandung, and Soekarno himself makes an appearance in the novel.[205] By the late 1930s, Soewarsih was part of a circle of young Indonesian intellectuals centered on the aforementioned Eddy du Perron.[206] This group included other prominent pergerakan activists, such as Soewarsih's sister Soewarni, who had been the chairperson of Istri Sedar (Aware Women) since 1932. Istri Sedar was the women's affiliate of Sjahrir's Bandung-based student organization, Pemuda Indonesia.[207] It was under du Perron's encouragement and mentorship within this progressive circle that *Buiten het Gareel* was written and published.

Soewarni described the intellectual climate of du Perron's circle as febrile: she recalled that du Perron had them read and discuss the classics of Asian and European literature, from Shakespeare and Plato to Dostoyevsky and Chekov, but also "politics, Marxism, history and economics . . . [even] belle lettres. He did not hide how much he disliked it whenever our minds appeared not open enough to our own culture; it was not only world literature we were supposed to read."[208] Sears describes this milieu eloquently:

> In the colonial context of the Indies, the group of nationalists Soewarsih portrays did realize that both sets of parents [the European and Indonesian Weltanschauung] had something to offer to the nationalist cause, whose

[204] Ibid., 88–89.
[205] Ingleson, *Road to Exile*, 88.
[206] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 162. Du Perron was Indies-born and left at twenty-two to be educated in Europe. He returned to the Indies in 1936 after having been part of the European interwar avant-garde, alongside novelists like André Malraux, to whom he was close.
[207] Ingleson, *Road to Exile*, 86.
[208] Soewarni Pringgodigdo, "Du Perron dan Pengaruhnja," 32–33. Quoted in Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 162.

> horizons had come from Europe but whose future shape in the emerging Indonesian nation would have to draw on local tradition for ideas and nourishment.[209]

Marxism was certainly on the table, as one among many ideologies. This was not a casual attachment, for Soewarni and Soegondo remained supporters of Sjahrir's Socialist Party into the 1950s.[210] In many ways, this was the same vibrancy and creativity apparent in the writings of Soekarno, Tan Malaka, or Mas Marco Kartodikromo; Soewarsih, Soewarni, and others in du Perron's circle were encouraged to forge their own intellectual path, drawing on the best of what the Indies and Europe had to offer. Despite moving in these socialist circles, Soewarsih considered herself a faithful Muslim and would go on to publish a biography of the Prophet Muhammad in 1956.[211]

Buiten het Gareel is too rich and complex to be neatly summarized in a paragraph or two, but parts of the plot are particularly germane. The protagonists of the novel, Dar and Lastri, are teachers in Bandung's Taman Siswa school, a *sekolah liar* that did not accept government funding, and which was therefore free to determine its own curriculum. Lastri struggles to deal with the recent rejection of her Sundanese-language novel manuscript by the government publishing house, the Balai Poestaka. Dar urges her not to be upset, because the Dutch-controlled Balai Poestaka has its own agenda, only publishing materials that it believes are politically "safe" for consumption and will further its *mission civilisatrice*. More broadly, both Dar and Lastri are melancholy, because their involvement in pergerakan activism during the heady 1920s has resulted in their losing social respectability and access to lucrative jobs. Despite their substantial education, they depend on meager salaries as teachers, and lament the materialism, herd instincts, and sheepish submissiveness of their fellow Indonesians. Their lives are peripatetic, and they are forced to move from school to school, from job to job, often relying on the goodwill of their families and sometimes having to compromise on their ideals to survive. Along the way, their relationship is deeply strained in various ways, and the reader is forced to confront the cost incurred by pergerakan activism in a colonial situation.

[209] Sears, *Situated Testimonies*, 118.
[210] Ibid., 103.
[211] Soewarsi Djojopoespito, *Riwajat Nabi Muhammad S.A.W.* (Djakarta: Timun Mas, 1956).

The novel traces their constant struggles with their schools' ailing finances, which result in several different initiatives, such as Dar's unpopular proposal to pay the staff according to need instead of ability or seniority. Lastri's and Dar's egalitarian principles are put to the test, however, when people whom they consciously or subconsciously consider their social inferiors—like the school attendant, Oerip—join the same political party and decide that they are now Dar's and Lastri's equals.[212] Their insouciance and almost childish disrespect for Dar and Lastri is aggravating but serves an important purpose. This behavior, and Dar's and Lastri's consequent distress, mirrors something that Soewarsih and her associates almost certainly experienced themselves—the gap between fine ideals and the difficulties (as well as unintended consequences) of putting those ideals into practice. There is a similar gap between the egalitarian relationship Dar and Lastri ostensibly have as lovers, coworkers, and comrades, and the societally sanctioned gender roles from which Dar cannot seem to free himself. Despite embracing the rhetoric of modernity and progress at work and home, he feels emasculated by Lastri's independence and unwillingness to do what he thinks she should.

Soewarsih captures, with raw, searing honesty, the tensions inherent in retaining one's identity while advocating for change in Indies society, as well as the birthing pains of the new Indonesia that pergerakan activists strove to bring into existence. The fine sentiments expressed in pergerakan manifestos and memoirs, while moving and often honest, never quite capture this pervasive discomfort. As the beneficiaries of a European education, as well as participants in pergerakan discourse (Dar as a teacher, Lastri as both a teacher and author), Dar and Lastri embody the process of "translation" that Siegel describes in *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution*.[213] They have partaken of the intellectual fruits of Europe and acquired certain convictions as a result. Applying those convictions, however, presents all kinds of problems: it is hard to put aside Lastri's mother tongue, Sundanese, to write her next novel in Bahasa Indonesia; it is hard to accept that their servants and employees now claim the role of comrade; it is hard to swallow the recalibration of gender roles within a marriage along more egalitarian lines. Implicit in their convictions is the superiority of "modernity" over "tradition," and the assumption that *kemajuan* (progress) is inherently desirable. However, the price of *kemajuan* is high, writ both small and large—Dar and Lastri's

[212] The People's Party, likely the fictional cognate of the Sarekat Rakyat.
[213] Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution*, 113, 158.

relationship and domestic life becomes tense as they struggle to manage their familial, financial, and professional difficulties.[214] Unsurprisingly, suicidal thoughts and extramarital temptations make appearances in the novel. These circumstances, in turn, are ultimately brought on by the inability of Dar and Lastri to reconcile their convictions as activists with the "double patriarchy" of Javanese tradition and Dutch paternalism.[215]

The process of translation is thus fraught with complications, and progress does not unfold in a straight line; instead, it creates obstacles that must be negotiated. Further complicating matters is Dar's and Lastri's desire to remain authentically Indonesian, an ontological state that requires constant definition and negotiation. Through the protagonists, Soewarsih teases out many of the anxieties of and tensions faced by the educated pergerakan elite, the milieu that produced leaders like Sjahrir, Hatta, and Soekarno. These anxieties and tensions would color their political decisions, shaping their views on how independent Indonesia ought to be constituted. Some, like Hatta, would double down on Indonesian authenticity in the form of Islam while championing European-style parliamentary democracy, attempting to keep tension in abeyance. Others, like Soekarno, would attempt to sublimate the tensions between maintaining authentic Indonesian-ness and breaking with the colonial past by formulating novel political ideologies like NASAKOM, which would supposedly break the impasse between being authentically Indonesian and being fearlessly "modern."

Another important theme of the novel is the tension between folk beliefs and rationalism in the umwelt of pergerakan activists. Dar and Lastri argue with Lastri's family over a range of issues, from whether they should bless the birth of their children by holding a *selametan* (ritual feast), to Lastri's father's polygamy and the validity of his *dukun* (shaman) status. Lastri is particularly sympathetic to tradition, and loath to dismiss her father's powers or the importance of rituals. Dar and Lastri are caught between "tradition" and "modernity" because they are products of European education, with corresponding convictions and ambitions. However, they also hope to reconcile those convictions and ambitions with a strong sense of Indies identity.

[214] Their troubles are manifold. Dar and Lastri's familial troubles stem from their many conflicts with their natal families, and Lastri's relationship with her sister is particularly damaged; their finances are strained because they work in flailing pergerakan schools that refuse state subsidies and control, and are thus poorly remunerated; their professional lives are plagued by the rejection of Lastri's Sundanese novel, Dar's temporary subjection to a teaching ban (*onderwijs verbod*), and police raids on the schools they work in.

[215] Sears, *Situated Testimonies*, 108.

This tension was at play within the broader pergerakan: *Buiten het Gareel*'s characters reflect the spectrum of pergerakan positions on the relationship between "tradition" and "modernity." Sjahrir represented the rationalist, "modern" element of the pergerakan, which rejected folk beliefs as a hindrance to progress.[216] Soekarno, ever the charismatic revolutionary, embraced tradition instead and gloried in the legitimacy provided by both Islam and syncretistic Javanese folk beliefs, even as he engaged in the same rationalist discourse that Sjahrir did.[217] Hatta, perhaps, lay somewhere between these two poles, neither wholly empiricist nor fully syncretic; rejecting some elements of tradition, he held on firmly instead to an essentialized form of Indonesian-ness, in which Islam was prominent.

This resonates with Chakrabarty's characterization of the tension between the universal and the particularistic in *Provincializing Europe*: the related but divergent visions for Indonesian-ness represented by Sjahrir (universal) and Soekarno (particularistic) mirror Chakrabarty's insights about historical writing.[218] For pergerakan leaders like Sjahrir, Hatta, and Soekarno, however, it was not history that concerned them, but the imagined contours of an unborn Indonesia. Whether they liked to admit it or not, they all had to reckon with the tension between a "tradition" (particularistic) that included Islam and a "modernity" (universal) that included Marxism, and different activists found different ways of resolving that tension. Certainly, there was cognitive dissonance, and perhaps also an idealistic, naive optimism. However, it is undeniable that a broad range of Indonesians came up with creative ways of reconciling their local, regional, religious (and even national) identities with their aspirations for a free and better Indonesia. Sometimes, putting Islam and Marxism in dialogue with one another was part of that effort; these conciliations should not be dismissed as "eccentric" or "utopian" simply because they were unusual or difficult to operationalize. Rather, these efforts to define a hybrid, noncolonial future for Indonesia were symptomatic of the conditions in which pergerakan activism was articulated, and *Buiten het Gareel* does an excellent job of capturing those conditions.

Buiten het Gareel also parallels Chakrabarty's insistence on taking peasant culture at face value: the supernatural world of spirits, ghosts, ancestors, or what might be glossed as folk belief and superstition. Allah continues to pervade the concerns of the novel's characters, even though the Islamic

[216] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 38.
[217] Legge, *Sukarno*, 20.
[218] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 64–71.

orthodoxy of their beliefs is questionable. For example, Lastri's mother fears it will be a sin against Allah not to hold the ritual *slametan* feast for her grandchild.[219] Islam (however it was understood and interpreted) was integral to the umwelt of the pergerakan and could not be neatly excised from their political consciousness. Islam was an integral part of how Lastri's parents understood the world, so it was an integral part of Dar's and Lastri's lives as well. This is poignantly encapsulated in the following line from Lastri, when arguing with Dar about whether Soekarno's adherence to Javanese traditions is appropriate: "Yes, we are modern, but even we in our hearts reserve a little space to burn some incense in the moments when we lose hope."[220] It was out of this tension inherent in reconciling universal values and particularistic local beliefs that creative and original attempts to put Islam and Marxism into meaningful dialogue were made possible—as one among many kinds of confluences in the pergerakan project of building an Indonesian identity.

We have already come across Xarim M. S. (aka Abdoe'l Xarim or Abdul Karim bin Moehamad Soetan) in chapter 1, as the editor and publisher of two explicitly Islamic Communist newspapers, *Hindia Sepakat* and *Oetoesan Ra'jat*. Identified as a Communist, he spent much of 1925 and 1926 in jail, before being sentenced to exile in Boven Digoel in June 1927. He was a cooperative prisoner while in Digoel and was allowed to return to Sumatra in 1932, where he settled in the publishing hub of Medan.[221] Despite his compliant behavior in Digoel, Xarim M. S. did not truly renounce his Marxist convictions; when the revolution broke out, he quickly became one of the two most prominent Sumatran PKI leaders (the other being Bachtaruddin) in 1945.[222] Moreover, while ostensibly cooperating with the Japanese authorities, he was involved in the clandestine antifascist underground during the Japanese occupation, alongside his brother-in-law Nathar Zainuddin.[223] Apparently, his Marxist credentials were sufficiently convincing that he even managed to cultivate contacts among former Indonesian Marxists working for the Japanese secret police, the Kempeitai.[224]

[219] Sears, *Situated Testimonies*, 103–6.
[220] Suwarsih Djojopuspito, *Manusia Bebas* (Jakarta: Djambatan, 1975), 61.
[221] Horton, "History Unhinged," 13.
[222] Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 135. Xarim M. S. remained a PKI leader until 1952, when he left the party a disillusioned man, much like Alimin. See Reid, *The Blood of the People*, 70. Horton points out that Xarim M. S. likely signed an agreement to stay out of politics in return for his early release. This is likely, given that his brother-in-law Nathar Zainuddin joined the noncooperative Aliarcham faction in Digoel and was only released in 1937.
[223] Horton, "History Unhinged," 30–31.
[224] Ibid.

Xarim M. S. wore many hats: besides being prewar labor activist, PKI leader, and wartime underground organizer, he was also a prolific publisher. *Hindia Sepakat* and *Oetoesan Ra'jat* were his focus in the 1920s, but after his return from Digoel he founded a small printing press, Aneka, and began publishing a newspaper titled *Penjedar* (lit. the conscious one) in 1938.[225] *Penjedar* became one of the two most widely read newspapers in Sumatra, the other being *Seruan Kita*. During the revolution, he also published *Pandoe Merah*, the weekly newspaper of the Sumatran PKI, which began publication in December 1945. Despite its enormous weekly print run of thirty thousand copies, the first three print runs sold out almost immediately.[226] *Penjedar* lasted until 1941, but during this time Xarim M. S. also published works of fiction, possibly because avoiding overt political activity was one of the conditions for his release from Digoel.[227] It is to one of his novels, *Hadji Dadjal* (1941), that we now turn.

Hadji Dadjal is useful because it shows how Islamic Communists such as Xarim M. S. understood Islam after the 1926–27 uprisings. Xarim M. S. had some experience writing fiction: Aneka had published two of his novelettes, *Ratna Kasihan Melati Deli: Boekoe tooneel dari toedjoeh bahagian* (1932) and *Pandoe Anak Boeangan* (1933). He followed these with ostensibly apolitical biographies such as *Abdul Aziz Ibnoe Soe'oed, Pahlawan Tanah Arab* (1934, Ibn Saud, Hero of the Arab Lands) and *Teukoe Oemar Djohan Pahlawan, Panglima Perang Besar di Tanah Atjeh* (1938/39, Teuku Umar Johan, Hero of the War in Aceh). Ibn Saud was the founding father of Saudi Arabia, and an object of fascination for many pergerakan leaders, including Soekarno.[228] Teuku Umar was a hero of the Aceh war, who led a punishing guerrilla campaign against the Dutch for years. Xarim M. S.'s attraction to these two identifiably Islamic figures—one seemingly poised to restore Arabian Islam to greatness in the context of colonial domination of Muslim societies, the other a heroic leader of *perang sabil* (holy war) against colonial domination—is revealing. Despite being a committed Communist, Xarim M. S.'s cultural points of reference were decidedly Islamic. The Islam that he embraced, and the Islamic leaders he deemed worthy of celebration, were figures of Islam

[225] Xarim M. S. stepped down as editor soon after founding *Penjedar*, and his role was filled by one Mohammad Saidt, a local PSII leader, in November 1938. This suggests that Xarim M. S. was still accepted within Islamic circles despite his undeniable PKI affiliations.

[226] Reid, *The Blood of the People*, 174.

[227] Horton, "History Unhinged," 16.

[228] Soekarno, "Letters on Islam from Endeh," in *Under the Banner of Revolution* (Djakarta: Publication Committee, 1966), 321.

resurgent, militant leaders willing to risk death to midwife their vision of a better world.

Thematically, *Hadji Dadjal* was unambiguously Islamic. It was published in the 1941 with a small print run of five thousand copies, and read as far away as Kalimantan, though it was primarily available in Sumatra.[229] Its narrative concerned a Singaporean *cendol* seller named Oemar, known to all as "Dadjal" because he never attended prayers at the mosque, visited the sick, called on the recently bereaved, or attended ritual communal feasts (*slametan*). Colloquially, *dadjal* refers to a person who is irreligious and even tempts others away from proper praxis.[230] Oemar had some education in the basic tenets of Islam, and he was supremely unconcerned with tradition, custom, or the rulings of religious scholars; instead, he relied on his own straightforward interpretation of the Qur'an to induce the principles that guided his life. A thrifty man, Oemar eventually saved enough money to go on the hajj, despite his ostensible impiety. Going against tradition, he only informed his neighbors shortly before departing, refusing to participate in the ceremonies that customarily preceded the hajj. While in Mecca, he continued to make a living selling *cendol*, and studied under a sheikh who also emphasized personal interpretation of the primary sources of Islamic knowledge, the Qur'an and hadith. Predictably, he was often in conflict with traditional religious authorities, some of whom actively exploited foreign pilgrims.[231] The plot generally concerns the righteousness of Oemar's positions in relation to the corruptions of Islamic praxis accepted by many traditional authority figures, like learned sheikhs or sayyids (descendants of the Prophet).

Any Indonesian reader would first be struck by seemingly paradoxical title, *Hadji Dadjal*. Like Oemar, Xarim M. S. had a limited Islamic education—having cut his teeth as a labor organizer in a public sector union—and was perhaps a kind of "Hadji Dadjal" himself. Oemar retained a healthy respect for institutionalized forms of Islamic knowledge, enrolling his stepchildren in Islamic schools in Egypt and setting up an Islamic educational foundation upon his return to Singapore. *Hadji Dadjal* even includes a long discussion of the relative benefits of Islamic education in Cairo, undoubtedly a reference to al-Azhar and its then-modernist curriculum.[232] Broadly speaking, Oemar

[229] Horton, "History Unhinged," 17.
[230] Ibid., 22.
[231] Abdoe'lxarim M. S., *Hadji Dadjal* (Medan: Tjerdas, 1941), 3–40.
[232] Ibid., 23.

represents the modernist/reformist strain of Islam that had been steadily gaining traction throughout the Indies, particularly among the *kaum muda* of West Sumatra. In the context of Xarim M. S.'s native Aceh, these modernist forces were represented by the Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh (Association of Acehnese Religious Scholars).[233] Xarim M. S.'s characterization of his protagonist as an oxymoronic "Hadji Dadjal" proclaimed the possibility of new forms of religiosity, superior forms of piety that depended not on obedience to authority or fidelity to tradition, but on the exercise of humanity's rational faculties (*akal*). As Oemar puts it, "In exchanging questions and answers with you, arguments always occur, because you think with the brain of others, speak with the mouth of others, and hear with the ears of others. But I think with my brain, speak with my mouth, and hear with my ears."[234]

Hadji Dadjal conveyed a simple message: Islam can and should guide one's conscience, but it is ultimately up to individuals to figure out Islam's moral lessons. This was a statement of faith in the power and liberating potential of *akal* rather than the formal exercise of jurisprudence (*ijtihad*) or, worse, blind obedience to classical rulings (*taqlid*). In Xarim M. S.'s conception of Islam, formal training in the Islamic sciences like *tafsir* or *fiqh* was not necessary to be a good Muslim. Good Muslims should not be concerned with disobedience of one's supposed betters or with flouting tradition, as long as they acted in good faith and thought for themselves. Oemar demonstrated this by refusing to make customary payments to sheikhs who conducted religious ceremonies, or by donating money to sayyids. Instead, he was diligent in his disbursal of zakat (alms).[235] He also successfully challenged a moneylending sheikh who made sizable profits from lending money at usurious rates (50% interest for a term of three to four months).[236] The novel's message was straightforward: good Muslims need not fear breaking with tradition but should instead act on their conscience and common sense.

Hadji Dadjal presented a minimalist vision of Islam, with a perceptible dose of Enlightenment values, but it was nevertheless discernibly pious. Given Xarim M. S.'s PKI affiliation, it is unsurprising that the injunction on zakat (alms) and the prohibition on *riba* (usury) were prominent in the novel. That said, Oemar was not unconcerned with matters of personal faith

[233] R. Michael Feener, *Shari'a and Social Engineering: The Implementation of Islamic Law in Contemporary Aceh, Indonesia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 30–32.
[234] Abdoe'lxarim M. S., *Hadji Dadjal*, 8.
[235] Ibid., 35–37.
[236] Ibid., 33.

or ritual: he disapproved of quickly slurred, ritualistic prayers, and insisted on speaking clearly and respectfully when praying.[237] Within Xarim M. S.'s worldview, Islam was not a matter of lip service or identity, but of righteous action with good intentions (*ihsan*). Islam was a firm ethical foundation from which righteous action would spring, whether that action was in the realm of the personal or the social. This was a conception of Islam that, when confronted with the harsh realities of Sumatra's extractive plantation economy, was open to the critiques and solutions offered by Marxism.[238]

Soekarno's "*Islam Progresif*"

Having focused on several West Sumatran pergerakan activists, this chapter ends by shifting the focus back to the political center of Java to examine the evolution of Soekarno's political thinking. The 1930s were Soekarno's moment: he quickly became the political center of gravity after founding the PNI in 1927, and even from exile he exerted significant influence on anticolonial politics. The evolution of Soekarno's religious identity and political ideas while in exile (1934–42) can be used as a rough barometer of how pergerakan discourse evolved in the later 1930s. From exile in Endeh to internment in Boven Digoel, pergerakan activists continued to mature politically, and in some cases—such as Soekarno and I. F. M. Salim—even developed newfound attachments to their Islamic identities. Soekarno's rapturous welcome upon his release from two years of imprisonment on December 31, 1931, an impassioned event attended by thousands, indicates how powerful a presence he had.[239] No examination of the 1930s pergerakan would be complete without exploring his evolving ideas, given the efficacy of his fiery rhetoric and the esteem he enjoyed even from his detractors.

Soekarno's writings from the 1930s show that the imbrication of Islam and Marxism was not a Minangkabau anomaly, but the result of a larger process of translation and adaptation. Soekarno's evolving understanding of Islamic piety was one example of how pergerakan activists were exploring new modalities of being authentically Indonesian and "modern" at the same time. Holding on to their identities as Muslims, they sought ways to bring the

[237] Ibid., 38–39.

[238] For the institutionalized abuses of the Sumatran plantation economy, see Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870–1979*, 120, 215.

[239] Ingleson, *Road to Exile*, 159.

ethical injunctions of their faith to bear on sociopolitical realities. Soekarno's attachment to Islam was often denigrated by his political opponents, and other nationalists often called his "Muslim-ness" into question by insinuating that he took a cynical, instrumentalist approach to religion, whether that religion was Islam or Javanese mysticism.[240] Abu Hanifah of Masjumi, for example, had long been acquainted with Soekarno and roundly mocked Soekarno's pretensions to Islamic piety in his memoirs.[241] Abu Hanifah certainly had grounds for his criticism: Soekarno's many romantic dalliances were hardly beyond reproach by Islamic standards, and his vanity was obvious for all to see. That said, it would be negligent to discount the important role that Islam played in Soekarno's political philosophy (however diluted and syncretic it might appear in Abu Hanifah's eyes), because he drew on Islamic ideas, rhetoric, and frameworks so often in his writings and speeches. He might not have been a great scholar of Islam, but his attempts to articulate a progressive understanding of Islam clearly facilitated his openness to Marxist ideas, regardless of his personal failings as a Muslim.

A careful examination of Soekarno's correspondence with Ahmad Hassan, the main spiritual leader of Persatuan Islam (Islamic Union, henceforth Persis) during the 1930s reveals Soekarno's deep attachment to Islam, and his genuine attempts to formulate an articulation of Islam that would be relevant to Indonesia's particular circumstances.[242] Soekarno's protracted exile allowed him to develop his conception of Islam in greater detail, since there were few opportunities for activism. Soekarno was first exiled to Endeh, Flores (1933–38) and later to Bengkulu, Sumatra (1938–42), after contracting malaria. He remained a palpable presence in pergerakan discourse, however. His writings, such as *Mentjapai Indonesia Merdeka* (Toward an Independent Indonesia) circulated in Permi-linked schools during the 1930s, and he continued to correspond with pergerakan figures like Ahmad Hassan.[243]

[240] Soekarno, "Letters on Islam from Endeh," October 17, 1936, 326.

[241] Abu Hanifah, *Tales of a Revolution* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1972), 70–71.

[242] Persis was founded in Bandung in 1923 and can be reasonably characterized as a positive reaction to the reformist/modernist ethos of the Sumatran *kaum muda*. This did not mean it was necessarily aligned—especially on matters of theology—with *kaum muda* organizations like Permi, or with pergerakan activists influenced by reformist Islam, such as Soekarno. For example, Natsir, a student of Hassan, penned an article criticizing Soekarno's take on nationalism in the Persis journal *Pembela Islam* in 1932. For more on Persis, see Howard M. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reformism in Twentieth Century Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1970).

[243] Marieke Bloembergen, "The Perfect Policeman: Colonial Policing, Modernity, and Conscience on Sumatra's West Coast in the Early 1930s," *Indonesia* 91 (2011): 182.

Soekarno's correspondence with Ahmad Hassan was one of generative dialogue, in which Soekarno sought guidance and instruction from a mentor, with whom he was unafraid to express and debate his opinions. Soekarno's letter to Hassan from December 1, 1934, struck a familiar tone, requesting that Hassan send him several core Islamic texts. Soekarno's requests included *al-Burhan*, a classic exegesis of the Qur'an penned by the eleventh-century scholar Abu'l-Fath an-Nasir ad-Dailami.[244] The familiarity with which Soekarno asks that Hassan "make a present" of these classic exegetical texts to him suggests a sustained interest in Islamic knowledge, which likely constituted the basis of his didactic relationship with Hassan.[245] He also requested copies of the classic hadith collections, central to Islamic jurisprudence, *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Abu Muslim*.[246] Perhaps most explicitly of all, Soekarno wrote, "I am very desirous of expanding my knowledge of law; because in daily practice the followers of Islam are completely controlled by law."[247]

Soekarno recognized Islam's potential to be a lubricant for colonial rule, which he heartily disapproved of. In his letter to Hassan dated January 25, 1935, Soekarno expressed his perturbance at dubious hadith with weak *isnad* (chain of transmission, or provenance), which he argued conditioned Muslims to be passive in the face of European colonial domination. "How great is the disaster overtaking the community of Islam from, for instance, the Hadits [hadith] which has it that 'the world' is for Christians, heaven for the Muslims . . . or the Hadits that those who believe in Allah must be soft and obedient as camels with pierced noses!"[248]

Instead, Soekarno's vision for Islam was decidedly egalitarian. He did not hesitate to make clear his abhorrence for how sayyids were treated by their fellow Muslims: "One of the blemishes of Islam today is this well-nigh idolatrous sanctification of human beings. . . . People are in error who think that Islam recognizes an 'aristocracy of Islam.' There is no religion that

[244] Soekarno, "Letters on Islam from Endeh," December 1, 1934, 309.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Soekarno, "Letters on Islam from Endeh," January 25, 1934, 310. Soekarno requested English translations of the hadith collections, since he was not sufficiently fluent in Arabic to read them in their original language. This is consistent with Soekarno's worldview: a product of European education, he was nonetheless serious about Islam in his own way, and was not averse to putting the intellectual fruits of Europe (such as the translations of classic Islamic texts by European Orientalists) to work for his purposes. This was an approach to Islam that emphasized the induction of principles, and of rigorously considered personal interpretation, rather than maximal "authenticity."
[247] Ibid.
[248] Ibid.

seeks equality of standing more than Islam does."[249] Soekarno also evinced a strong attraction to the *kaum muda* ethos of modernist Islam. He understood Islam to be fundamentally rational and therefore suitable for providing organizational principles for Indonesian society. It was the corruption of Islamic praxis by hadith of dubious provenance, as well as the taboo against exercising *ijtihad*, that undermined Islamic societies:

> I put great stress upon studying the Hadits, because, according to my utmost conviction[,] . . . [t]he world of Islam came to decline because many people "practised" weak and false Hadits. It is because of such Hadits that Islam has come to be befogged by conservatism, superstition, hereticism, anti-rationalism etc., whilst there is no religion more rational and simpler than Islam.[250]

These positions were sufficiently important to Soekarno that he was willing to express them clearly to Hassan, a prolific Islamic scholar known for his orthodox piety, who certainly had a more nuanced and more conservative understanding of hadith.[251] In later letters, Soekarno bemoaned the suppression of *akal* resulting from the absence of *ijtihad*: "The genius of the world of Islam has been dead ever since the opinion arose that it is impossible for there to be an independent expert in Muslim law who could surpass the 'Four Imams' [the jurists who founded the four schools of jurisprudence]."[252] This framework of a rational, dynamic, and progressive Islam undoubtedly informed Soekarno's political development and enabled his synthetic approach to nationalism and Marxism.

To Soekarno, an Islamic education was eminently compatible with a secular education in the sciences and humanities. In another of his letters, he congratulated Hassan on the founding of a new *pesantren* and urged Hassan to incorporate more "Western knowledge" into the curriculum.[253] To Soekarno, an education in the Islamic sciences like *tafsir* and

[249] Ibid., 309.

[250] Soekarno, "Letters on Islam from Endeh," March 26, 1935, 311. Soekarno goes on to bemoan the "closing of the gate of *ijtihad*" in this letter, a phenomenon generally equated by traditionalist scholars with the fall of the Abbasid caliphate to the Mongols in 1258 CE. This was taken to mean that the age of the great jurists had ended, and succeeding scholars could no longer exercise *ijtihad* but merely do their best to follow in the footsteps of their superior predecessors.

[251] Persis, the organization that Hassan helped found, was known for its deeply self-righteous approach to orthodox piety. Natsir, once a student of Hassan's and a member of Persis himself, ridiculed Permi for its alleged heterodoxy, disparaging it as an organization with only a thin gloss of Islam. Assyaukanie, *Islam and the Secular State*, 46.

[252] Soekarno, "Letters on Islam from Endeh," December 14, 1935, 316.

[253] Soekarno, "Letters on Islam from Endeh," April 22, 1936, 319.

fiqh was incomplete without the broader general knowledge in which these disciplines might be situated: "How can someone truly understand God's word that everything was made by him in 'couples,' if he does not understand biology, does not know about electrons, does not know about positive and negative, does not understand action and reaction?"[254] Soekarno embraced a forward-looking conception of Islam, whose precepts could and should be put in dialogue with the knowledge generated by other societies.

This palpable willingness to reconsider and redefine Islamic praxis constituted an ineluctable component of the pergerakan milieu. Even a self-consciously pietist organization like Persis was open to dialogue with Soekarno, even though he regularly expressed opinions that traditionalists would find thoroughly unacceptable. It was such an environment that made possible bold attempts to conciliate Islam with Marxist critiques of the capitalist economy, as Soekarno had already done in 1926.[255] This zeitgeist is perhaps most eloquently expressed by Soekarno in a letter to Hassan dated February 22, 1936:

> Why are we required to return to the age of "Islam's greatness" of former times? The laws of Shari'ah? Do we forget that the laws of Shari'ah are not only about what is forbidden . . . ? Do we forget that there are still things that we are allowed either to do or not to do (*mubah*) or which are to be determined by ourselves (*djaiz*)? . . . How good would it be if the Muslim remembered that in the affairs of the world, in matters of statesmanship, he is "allowed to make comparison" (*berqiyas*) [analogical reasoning, a component of formal *fiqh*], allowed to make innovations (*berbid'ah*), allowed to discard former ways, allowed to take new ways.[256]

In his own circumlocutory way, Soekarno signaled his belief that Islam could be reconciled with Marxist ideas. In a series of four articles published in *Pandji Islam* in 1940, he argued that the "bubbling stream" of early Islam had been "frozen" by Ash'ari theology, bringing an end to nearly five centuries of Islamic cultural and intellectual dynamism.[257] While this is almost certainly an unfair mischaracterization of Ash'ari theology (the dominant theological position in Sunni Islam), Soekarno's broader point was historical;

[254] Ibid., 320.

[255] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 303. Madinier reproduces the Masjumi handbill for the 1955 elections, which contains policies clearly influenced by socialism, such as the promotion of labor unions collectivization, and nationalization of core industries.

[256] Soekarno, "Letters on Islam from Endeh," February 22, 1936, 318.

[257] Soekarno, "Rejuvenating our Concepts of Islam," *Under the Banner of Revolution* (Djakarta: Publication Committee, 1966), 378.

much like pre-Reformation Roman Catholicism, he argued, Islam had become increasingly indifferent to science and philosophy since the thirteenth century. Providing a broad survey of contemporary Muslim reformism in Turkey, Iran, India, and Arabia, Soekarno concluded that "today rationalism is demanding its seat on the throne of Islam again."[258]

Soekarno challenged his readers to dispute his claim that the youth were uninterested in Islam because of Indonesian Muslims' overreliance on the sacralized, unquestioned authority of the classical jurists and exegetes. Inverting the Dutch maxim "Who has the youth has the future," Soekarno argued that the ability of Islam to retain the allegiance of Indonesian youth must be the barometer of its success.[259] Summoning a plethora of examples, from Socrates and Plato to Muhammad and his early companions, Soekarno argued that the ability to capture the imagination of the young was a strong indicator of any philosophy or religion's relevance. In effect, Soekarno was arguing for a relentless commitment to constantly reinterpreting Islam in accordance with the evolving precepts of secular knowledge. Tantalizingly, he mused: "Is not the socialist movement very much favored by the Youth too?"[260]

Conclusion

Soekarno was nurtured by an eclectic pergerakan milieu that freely translated and adapted the best the world had to offer; this formative experience continued to color his political vision as the republic's president. Outside of organizations and institutions like the Diniyyah schools, the PSII and Permi, this period was also formative for the next generation of Indonesian nationalists. Abu Hanifah, then a young pergerakan activist of an age with Leon Salim, is a case in point. Born and initially educated in Padang Panjang, West Sumatra, Abu Hanifah was sufficiently economically privileged and intellectually gifted to gain access to the best colonial education available to natives: the Europeesche Lagere School (ELS, Lower European School) and the School tot Opleiding van Inlandsche Artsen (STOVIA, Medical School for Natives) in Batavia. He would go on to become a republican leader in Sukabumi, Java, during the revolution, and later became part of Masjumi's core leadership. He recalled the eclectic intellectual atmosphere of 1930s

[258] Ibid., 380.
[259] Ibid.
[260] Ibid.

Batavia as brimming with unbounded possibilities. He wrote in his memoirs of an autodidactic environment in which the best of both the colonized and colonial worlds attracted young Indonesians:

> The men of '28 [those who came of age after the 1926–27 uprisings] had a very busy life. In their club they were reading and debating about events of the world all the time. The past was rediscovered, and the future debated, sometimes heatedly. Famous leaders of other countries were analysed. Their behaviour, their sentiments, their systems, were studied. Debates could be very fierce and lengthy. The American, the French, the Russian revolutionaries; the Boxer Rebellion; the heroic freedom fighters of the Philippines; the movements of Gandhi, Kemal Pasha; the Third International of the Communists; all of these were at one time or another debated. . . . We plunged into Das Kapital, and tried to find out if Marxism was good for the world or us. . . . We interested ourselves in the words and deeds of Gandhi, Azam Pasha, Garibaldi, and we didn't neglect Luther, Calvin, and the Jesuits . . . we looked up Marx, Engels and Lenin. It was enlightening but didn't impress me much.[261]

Despite his ambivalence for Marxism when he was writing his memoirs in 1972, he still had no qualms about describing himself and his Masjumi colleagues (specifically, Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, Mohammad Roem, Kasman Singodimedjo, and even Masjumi president Soekiman) as "religious socialists," firm in their Islamic faith but also well disposed toward the socialist lessons they had absorbed from Europe.[262]

More important, Abu Hanifah captured something of the era's zeitgeist. His generation of the pergerakan, barred from open political activity and with its leaders—chiefly Sjahrir, Hatta, and Soekarno—in exile by 1933, continued to be drawn toward Marxism as one among many ideologies that might yield important lessons for Indonesia. They took what they found useful from Marxism, especially its trenchant critique of capitalism and imperialism. Naturally, not everyone agreed on how Marxism could be applied or synthesized usefully, and a plurality of approaches existed. Some, like the pious Acehnese Jusuf Muda Dalam, who served in the anti-Nazi underground in the Netherlands before returning to Indonesia to join the PKI

[261] Abu Hanifah, *Tales from a Revolution*, 63–64.
[262] Ibid., 161.

during the revolution, grew to accept its Communist convictions alongside its Islamic faith.[263] Abu Hanifah and his colleagues in Masjumi did not accept the label "Marxist," but like Hatta, they certainly saw at least some of its prescriptions as relevant to and compatible with their Islamic faith.

Unlike the pre-1927 generation, those who came of age in the 1930s looked less to an international Communist movement for comprehensive, global solutions to colonialism's inequities. While still engaged in the project of "translating" the world to the Indies, they turned more reflective and drew more deeply on the European socialist tradition. Denied mass rallies or labor organization, the 1930s pergerakan sought other productive avenues of activism, such as study clubs, scouting organizations, student associations, and women's rights organizations, which would cultivate an Indonesian subjectivity and prepare a future citizenry for self-government. Their engagement with Marxism, therefore, was less concerned with revolution or direct action against colonial oppression, and more concerned with shaping future Indonesians; said Indonesians would need to understand a rapidly changing world to build and keep their own state, and Marxism provided powerful analytical lenses for those purposes. Tilling the soil of Indonesian political discourse, the 1930s pergerakan prepared for the day that the seeds planted in the 1920s would find the right conditions to germinate.

The experiences of privation, betrayal, and camaraderie during the Indonesian Revolution (1945–49), as well as the passions and expectations engendered, moved erstwhile pergerakan activists to imagine bold new futures for Indonesia. They did so with a gusto and idealism that far exceeded the patient cultivation of the 1930s, allowing eclectic and creative political visions that included both Islam and Marxism to emerge. The revolutionaries of the 1940s, especially the republican leadership, were drawn from the ranks of the 1930s activists. Their experiences of intellectual growth, as well as prosecution and exile, during the 1930s laid the foundation for the creative and optimistic tenor of Indonesian political thinking during the revolution. It is to this revolutionary efflorescence that the next chapter turns.

[263] Soerjono and Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, "On Musso's Return," *Indonesia* 29 (1980): 68. Jusuf Muda Dalam was a member of the PKI from 1947 to 1954, when he left to join the PNI. He was initially attracted to Marxism while studying in the Ekonomisch Hoge School in Rotterdam, where he came into contact with the pro-pergerakan elements of the Dutch labor movement and Dutch Communist Party. He never renounced his Islamic faith and was known among his fellow Indonesian students in the Netherlands as unusually pious. During the revolution, he served as a lieutenant colonel in the republican army. He eventually served as the director, then governor, of the Bank Negara Indonesia (National Bank of Indonesia) as well as the minister for central bank affairs under Soekarno's guided democracy regime. His professional life was, in a sense, an embodiment of NASAKOM. He was sentenced to death in September 1966 by the Suharto regime.

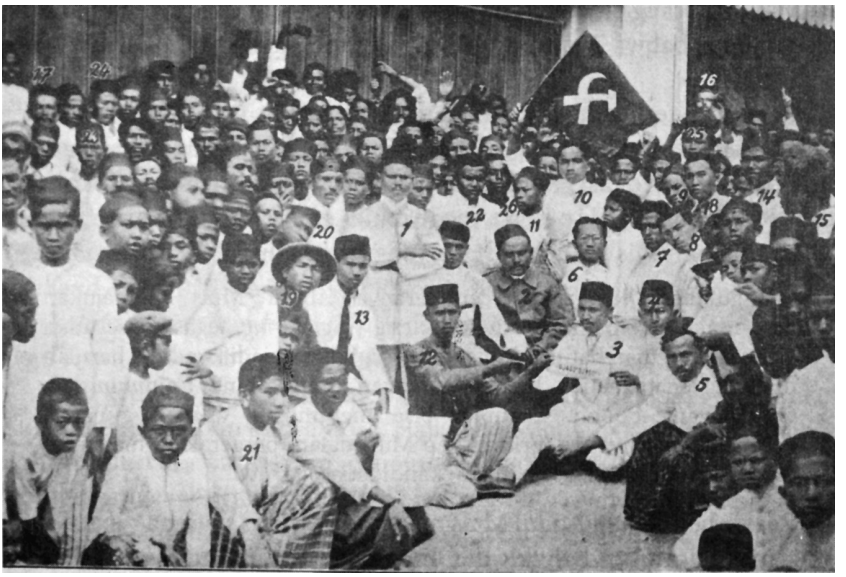

Figure 1.1 Representatives of various Sarekat Rakyat branches gathered outside the International Debating Club offices in Padang Panjang, West Sumatra. Nathar Zainuddin is marked 1, and Haji Datuk Batuah is marked 2. Photograph courtesy of the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

Figure 1.2 Semaun being hoisted upon the shoulders of Dutch workers welcoming him to Amsterdam on September 21, 1923. This photograph was originally published in *De Tribune*, a Dutch socialist newspaper. Photograph courtesy of the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

Figure 1.3 Darsono with his son, Alam, in 1938. This photograph was most likely taken in Berlin, where Darsono worked with European communists to organize sailors at the time. Shortly after this was taken, Alam would be sent to the Netherlands to escape the Nazi takeover, and would rarely see his father again. Photograph courtesy of the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

Figure 2.1 Maria Ulfah Santoso, social minister (March 1946–June 1947) in the Sjahrir government (1945–47). She was Indonesia's first female cabinet minister, as well as the first Indonesian woman to obtain a law degree from a Dutch university in 1933. Photograph courtesy of the Dutch National Archives, The Hague.

Figure 3.1 Members of Soekarno's presidential cabinet (September 2, 1945–November 14, 1945), in October 1945. From left to right: Vice President Mohammed Hatta, President Soekarno, State Secretary Abdul Gaffar Pringgodigdo, Foreign Minister Achmad Soebardjo, and Minister for Public Works Abikusno Tjokrosujuso. Photograph courtesy of the Nationaal Archief / Collection Spaarnestad.

Figure 3.2 The Dutch council communist Henriette Roland Holst, seated second row, sixth from left, in Haarlem, 1929. Next to her, seated second row, fifth from left, is a young Mohammed Hatta. Photograph courtesy of the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, and reproduced with the kind permission of Dr. Jan Hendrik Scheewe.

Figure 3.3 Mohammad Natsir, Information Minister of the Republic of Indonesia, in 1948. As the Masjumi party's leader, he would eventually serve as Prime Minister from September 1950 – April 1951. Photograph courtesy of the Dutch National Archives, The Hague.

Figure 3.4 Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, Finance Minister of the Republic of Indonesia, in 1947. A member of Masjumi, he served as Finance Minister from October 1946 – July 1947. Photograph courtesy of the Dutch National Archives, The Hague.

Figure 4.1 Unidentified members of Gerwani's Surabaya branch, date unknown, circa 1950–65. Photograph courtesy of the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

Figure 5.1 On the right, Roeslan Abdoelgani, former information minister (November 1963–August 1964) and foreign minister (March 1956–April 1957), at Amsterdam's Schilpol airport in October 1966. Next to him is the socialist politician and diplomat, Soedjatmoko. Photograph courtesy of the Dutch National Archives, The Hague.

3

The Revolutionary Consensus

In "The *Revolusi* Represented: Contemporary Indonesian Images of 1945," Hans Antlöv shows how the Indonesian Revolution (1945–49) had slipped its moorings and become a vessel into which both individuals and the state could pour their romanticized ideals. The revolution functioned as a signifier to which they could attach their preferred mythos of Indonesian history.[1] The historical reality of the revolution was often silenced in public discourse and education, especially narratives that challenged the cherished mythos of one nation united against imperialism. Two museums founded during Suharto's New Order regime (1966–98), one on Communism (Museum of the Communist Party's Betrayal, Museum Pengkhianatan PKI), and another on Islam (Museum Beware of Authority, Museum Waspada Purbawisesa), functioned as symbolic and practical attempts to consolidate and thus control historical memory on potentially fraught topics, including the revolutionary narrative.[2]

This chapter aims to subvert such attempts to direct historical narratives of Islam, Marxism, and the revolution along familiar, comforting channels; narratives that salve individual consciences, or "nationalize" history in the state's interest. Instead, it will show how the revolution was a moment of remarkable ideological efflorescence, when unprecedented solidarity between putative citizens of varied backgrounds allowed eclectic combinations of religious identities and political commitments. This occurred at a moment when Indonesians were intensively searching for models upon which they could reshape their society. Such a freewheeling environment made possible a plurality of combinations of Islam and Marxism. Amid the fervor of revolution, avowedly Muslim politicians like Achmad Soebardjo and Islamic scholars like Hamka would induce insights directly from Marx and Engels, going beyond Permi's or PSII's affective identification with socialism or

[1] Hans Antlöv, "The Revolusi Represented: Contemporary Indonesian Images of 1945," *Indonesia Circle* 24, no. 68 (1996): 1–21.
[2] Ibid., 6.

Ummah Yet Proletariat. Lin Hongxuan, Oxford University Press. © Oxford University Press 2023.
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780197657386.003.0004

implicit reliance on Marxist critiques in the 1930s. Islamic Communists of the pre-1927 generation like Nathar Zainuddin, Haji Datuk Batuah, and former Digoel internees would return to prominence as defenders of the republic, reinvigorating regional branches of the shattered PKI. The reborn PKI carried the mark of their influence, with both the rank-and-file member and the new leadership coalescing around D. N. Aidit's vigorous argument that Communism could serve Islamic ends. Even Tan Malaka would resurface to lead a Communist alternative to the PKI, and his commitment to Islam was as firm as ever. The Islamic Communism of the 1920s, oriented toward global resistance to European imperialism, yielded in favor of more Indonesia-centric engagements with Marxist ideas. The revolutionaries' creativity, complexity, and eclecticism highlight the limitations of relying on well-worn categories like "nationalist," "Communist," or "Islamic" to taxonomize Indonesian political thinking.

Freed from the omnipresent specter of colonial censorship, Indonesians across the political spectrum found their own ways of making both Islamic identity and Marxist ideology relevant to their present circumstances and to their aspirations for Indonesia. Some ideologues within the Islamic party Masjumi did so with a light touch, selectively incorporating Marxist ideas and rhetoric into their political visions. Others in the labor movement were more explicit, asserting the possibility of being both Marxist and Islamic without diluting either. At the same time, the explicit Islamic Communism of the pre-1927 generation never entirely disappeared, though it could no longer dominate mainstream political consciousness. For example, former Digoel internees Boerhanuddin (Pendidikan), Moerad (Pendidikan), Alibasah Winata (PKI), Sayid Abdurrahman Almassawa (PKI), and Djalaludin Thaib (Permi) found the time and inclination to create the Mekka-Fonds (Mecca Fund) from wartime exile in Australia, which helped Indonesian religious students stranded in Saudi Arabia during the Second World War.[3]

This chapter uses the terms "Indonesia" and "Indonesians" even though full legal recognition of an independent Indonesian polity did not occur until the transfer of sovereignty from the Netherlands East Indies to the short-lived federal United States of Indonesia (Republik Indonesia Serikat)

[3] Harry A. Poeze, "From Foe to Partner to Foe Again: The Strange Alliance of the Dutch Authorities and Digoel Exiles in Australia, 1943–1945," *Indonesia* 94 (October 2012): 68–69.

on December 27, 1949. This is done not only for the sake of clarity, but because the Indonesian republicans did have a fair claim to the existence of an Indonesian republic proclaimed by Soekarno on August 17, 1945 (see Figure 3.1). The republic proclaimed in 1945 was genuinely popular across the archipelago. Rare exceptions were those communities most closely tied to the colonial state, such as the islands of Ambon and Manado, which provided a disproportionately high number of recruits for the colonial army. The republic's control over most of the territory it claimed was corporeal, and exercised through regional Komite Nasional Indonesia (KNI, Indonesian National Committees), though these were later circumscribed by successful British and Dutch military action. For all intents and purposes, Indonesia and Indonesians did exist after August 1945, although this reality was contested both militarily and diplomatically. This chapter therefore refers to "Indonesia" and "Indonesians," especially since attempts were clearly being made to define an "Indonesian" identity and shape "Indonesian" culture in the sources examined here.

The proclamation of independence on August 17, 1945, opened new horizons for erstwhile pergerakan activists, who now became republican partisans struggling to make their political visions corporeal. For the most part, they were optimistic about the breadth of their visions for Indonesia, perhaps somewhat naively tending to believe that their visions were inclusive enough to accommodate everyone else's interests, preferences, and emphases. This open-minded approach to constituting the Indonesian nation-state, taking inspiration from diverse sources and attempting to include as many people as possible, was encapsulated by R. A. A. Wiranata Koesoema's pamphlet, *Islamietische Democratie in Theory en Praktijk* (1948):

> Doesn't the sun shine equally on all? Don't they all breathe His [God's] air equally? Doesn't God's earth give equal means to sustain life for all? Doesn't history show that those who are considered backward people today, once occupied the pinnacle of civilization? Does the world have any one country, one nation, or one race, which can rightly boast to be the only creator of civilization and can proclaim from the rooftops that it owes none of its culture to that of neighboring countries and peoples? Aren't the various civilizations continuations, or, at best, transformations and combinations of various elements of several other cultures? Has any culture ever existed as a self-contained unit? Doesn't all this prove that humanity forms a single

> family, which inherits and bequeaths the same inheritance of important goods?[4]

This openness to learning from the world, and a concomitant pride in Indonesian culture, certainly helped facilitate the adaptation of Marxist ideas. Naturally, this openness led to different groups developing different—though overlapping—visions for the Indonesian republic. While the Dutch provided a common enemy against which they had to cooperate, genuine and serious differences in republicans' visions were papered over in the name of unity. Their divergent political hopes, however, could not be permanently sublimated by the republican rhetoric of fraternity, no matter how heartfelt and effusive. The 1950s would see those fault lines re-emerge, but while the revolution lasted, its ethic of solidarity and climate of optimism allowed sophisticated conciliations of Islam and Marxism to publicly resurface after more than a decade of suffocation by the Dutch and Japanese.

Unsurprisingly, various pro-republic political movements and military bodies began to split away from the republic's formal political leadership by 1948, long before the revolution began to wind down in late 1949. Before this, republicans had already been already divided into a wide range of parties, civil society organizations, unions, and militias, which coalesced into loose but sometimes politically effectual coalitions. The centrifugal forces dividing republicans were strong—most notably Kartosuwirjo's Darul Islam rebellion, which began in 1948 over whether Indonesia ought to be an "Islamic state"—but countervailing centripetal forces were not negligible either. Various republican factions were able to cooperate on the basis of their shared political visions and aspirations, to which both Islam and Marxism were important.

In the revolutionary context, labels such as "socialist," "Communist," or "nationalist" obscured how similar most republican factions were. As the socialist activist Djoeir Moehamad succinctly put it, "It was difficult to distinguish one leftist group from another."[5] These inchoate visions of how the republic ought to be were often able to accommodate Islam and Marxism

[4] R. A. A. Wiranata Koesoema, "Islam and Democracy (1948)," in *Indonesian Political Thinking, 1945–1965*, trans. Herbert Feith and Lance Castles (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), 224. Wiranata Koesoema was a highly educated civil servant who rose to become regent of Bandung, eventually serving as a regents' representative on the Volksraad. During the revolution, he served briefly as interior minister under Soekarno's presidential cabinet, and later as president of the Dutch-sponsored state of Pasundan within the federal United States of Indonesia (Repulik Indonesia Sarekat). A pious Muslim and avowed democrat, his republican sympathies led him to support the voluntary dissolution of Pasundan and its sublimation into a unitary republic.

[5] Djoeir Moehamad, *Memoar Seorang Sosialis*, 225.

simultaneously precisely because they were amorphous. In fact, the main point of contention that distinguished the different factions was not a specific ideological disagreement on what an Indonesian state ought to be like, but rather the desirability of negotiating with the Dutch, with all the concessions such a policy entailed: protecting Dutch plantations and shipping facilities, while tightening and enforcing labor laws to prevent debilitating strikes.[6]

This gaping fault line should not, however, obscure the very tangible capacity for cooperation and unity that the republicans displayed. Robert Cribb rightly pointed out that the revolution may well have strengthened the republic's civilian bureaucracy, with the exigencies of war and the general commitment to saving the republic resulting in the evolution of a capable civil service at both the regional and central levels.[7] Drawing on republicans' recollections as well as Dutch intelligence reports, I corroborate this argument by showing that cooperation between republican administrators and militias of various political persuasions—including avowedly Islamic and avowedly Marxist ones—was indeed common. At the parliamentary level, Cribb characterized the Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat (KNIP) as prone to stalemate because the balance of power was distributed across various factions.[8] While this is likely true, my research qualifies Cribb's claim by showing that cooperation between Muslims and Marxists was common in a situation where no one faction could maintain its dominance, so cooperation was often necessary to achieve immediate political or military objectives.[9] Throughout the revolution, both the opposition and incumbent governments consisted of coalitions including both Marxist and Muslim parties. The many crises of revolution facilitated, and perhaps even necessitated, overt cooperation between Islamic and Marxist parties in parliament and government.

By February 1949, the initial solidarity and cooperation between republican leaders lay in tatters. Tan Malaka had been summarily executed by a hostile unit of the republican army during the chaos of a Dutch offensive,

[6] A concomitant development paralleled this struggle over national policy: what historians have termed the "social revolution." This began in 1946 but continued throughout and even after the revolution. Grounded in local grievances and power dynamics, local leaders were (often violently) overthrown by militias or popular uprisings regardless of national-level political alignments. See Fogg, *Indonesia's Islamic Revolution*, 94–99; Anton Lucas, *One Soul One Struggle: Region and Revolution in* Indonesia (Sydney: Asian Studies Association of Australia and Allen & Unwin, 1991).

[7] Robert Cribb, "Legacies of the Revolution," in *Democracy in Indonesia: 1950s and 1990s*, ed. David Bourchier and John Legge (Melbourne: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1994), 76.

[8] The KNIP, or Central Indonesian National Committee, was constituted in August 1945 and served as the republic's *de facto* legislature during the Indoensian Revolution.

[9] Ibid.

Amir Sjarifruddin and Musso had been killed during the suppression of the Madiun affair, and Sjahrir had been politically marginalized for signing the deeply unpopular Linggadjati agreement; he was effectively living in self-imposed exile in London. Soekarno's hopes for a grand coalition uniting nationalists, Muslims, and Marxists, his cherished dream since 1926, were dashed. Nevertheless, conciliatory discourses on Islam and Marxism like those championed by Tan Malaka continued to circulate and influenced republicans across the political spectrum. Various republican factions blended Islam and Marxism, and this chapter examines three of them. The first group is belligerent republicans inspired by Tan Malaka, influenced by his political beliefs to varying degrees, and glossed as the Persatuan Perjuangan (PP, Struggle Union), Gerakan Revolusi Rakyat (GRR, People's Revolutionary Movement), and Benteng Republik (Fortress Republic) at different points in time. The second faction is Muslim republicans with close ties to Masjumi, described by George Kahin as "religious socialists, who wanted Islam to play an important role in the Indonesian state."[10] Third are the socialists and Communists aligned with Amir Sjarifuddin who embraced their roles as members of a global revolutionary movement, glossed first as the Sajap Kiri and later as the Front Demokrasi Rakyat (FDR). In addition to these factions, which were political vehicles with associated militias and parliamentary representatives, this chapter will also examine Muslims in the labor movement, including a remarkable number of vocal and eloquent women, whose activism was informed by an admixture of Islamic, Marxist, and feminist concerns. This chapter will then examine how Islamic identity and Marxist ideas were intertwined in popular print culture published during the revolution. It will conclude by analyzing a little-known regional organization, PKI Lokal Islamy, which eclectically blended Islam and Communism to justify its sometimes-dubious revolutionary activities.

Republican Political Alignments in Brief

Sajap Kiri, Persatuan Perjuangan, and Benteng Republik

For most of the revolution, republican politics were dominated by three parties: Soekarno's former party, the PNI (Partai Nasionalis Indonesia,

[10] Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, 309–10.

Indonesian Nationalist Party), the Islamic party Masjumi (Partai Madjelis Surjo Muslimin Indonesia), and Sutan Sjahrir's and Amir Sjarifuddin's combined Socialist Party (Partai Sosialis).[11] The PKI was not a significant political player until 1948. Its veteran leaders, such as Sardjono and Alimin, only returned to Indonesia in mid-1946. The PKI was fractured into several factions, and most Marxists were distributed across a spectrum of smaller parties and organizations like the Socialist Party, the Partai Buruh Indonesia (PBI, Indonesian Labor Party), Pesindo (Indonesian Socialist Youth), and Acoma (Generation of Communist Youth).[12] The main fault line dividing them was not their disparate visions for future Indonesia—these overlapped significantly—but whether they were prepared to negotiate with the Dutch. Negotiations under Sjahrir's socialist government had resulted in the Linggadjati agreement of November 1946, making significant concessions to the Dutch, but the agreement was effectively voided by the colonial army's Operation Product in July 1947. Sjahrir's commitment to a diplomatic solution (known as *diplomasi*) made many concessions but yielded few results; *diplomasi* was now intensely unpopular.

During this first phase of the revolution, there were two main republican factional coalitions. Sajap Kiri (Left Wing) was nominally headed by Amir Sjarifuddin and supportive of *diplomasi*. Sajap Kiri's main constituents were the Socialist Party, the PBI, the PKI, and Pesindo.[13] In opposition to Sjahrir's government and the Sajap Kiri was the Persatuan Perjuangan (PP, Struggle Union), nominally led by Tan Malaka, which rejected *diplomasi*. The PP attracted the support of a very broad range of actors, from various Muslim and Marxist organizations to the commander of the republican army, General Sudirman himself. This was a loose coalition: many of them were extremely wary of Tan Malaka's maneuvering his way into power and were united only in their opposition to Sjahrir's *diplomasi*.[14] The PP made a bid for

[11] Ibid., 157.

[12] Ibid., 158. The PBI had a particularly convoluted history. Founded as the Barisan Buruh Indonesia (BBI, Indonesian Labor Front) in September 1945, it would reconstitute itself as a political party, the PBI, in November 1945. The PBI held 35 out of 514 seats in the revolutionary parliament. Members of the BBI who disagreed with the transformation re-established the BBI in December 1945, later changing their organization's name to Gasbi. Under Setiadjit's leadership, the PBI would merge with the PKI in September 1948, but a faction that rejected merger reconstituted the PBI as the Partai Buruh (PB, Labor Party) under Iskandar Tedjasukmana's leadership in December 1949. The PB won two seats in the 1955 elections, and Iskandar Tedjasukmana thrice served as labor minister during the parliamentary democracy period. See Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, 161, and Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 325.

[13] Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, 199.

[14] Ibid., 176.

power in July 1946, known to historians as the July 3 Affair, attempting and botching a coup that landed the key PP leaders like Tan Malaka in jail. They were imprisoned until mid-1948.

During the debates over the ratification of the Linggadjati agreement in early 1947, the former PP reconstituted itself as the Benteng Republik (Republican Fortress), an even broader coalition of parties and organizations that opposed ratification, or indeed continuing negotiations at all. The main Muslim parties, Masjumi and the PSII[15]—as well as their affiliated *laskar* (militias) and *badan perjuangan* (lit. struggle bodies, mass organizations that were only partially armed, if at all)—sided with Benteng Republik. The "secular" Sjahrir, with his elite Dutch education and commitment to negotiation, discomfited them. By contrast, Tan Malaka's accommodation of Islam within his Communist framework was familiar and less threatening.[16] For the purposes of this chapter, PP and Benteng Republik will be treated as coterminous, and the supporters of Tan Malaka's antinegotiation policy (known as 100% *Merdeka*) will simply be referred to as PP supporters. However, it is important to point out that Tan Malaka's loyalists, in the sense of those looked to him for leadership and eventually confederated in the Murba Party in late 1948, should not be conflated with the PP's supporters. Some PP supporters were indeed followers of Tan Malaka, but they were always a minority within the PP.

The Front Demokrasi Rakjat and Gerakan Revolusi Rakjat

The deep unpopularity of the Linggadjati agreement led to Sjahrir's fall from power and his replacement by Amir Sjarifuddin as prime minister.

[15] Despite its near complete suppression during the Japanese occupation, the PSII emerged from the occupation with its organizational structure, leadership, and brand recognition intact during the revolution. Both the PSII and its various splinters were able to reactivate their networks of activists in 1945, and all joined Masjumi in the spirit of universal Muslim solidarity. PSII alumni dominated the Masjumi leadership, across both the Dewan Pimpinan (Party Leadership Council) and the Madjelis Surjo (Consultative Council). This lasted until 1947, when the temptation of core ministerial posts in Amir Sjarifuddin's cabinet (which Masjumi had declined to support) tempted several of the PSII's top leaders to break away from Masjumi and reconstitute the PSII as a separate party. This spoke volumes about the party's lasting appeal: despite the long period of enforced inactivity during the occupation, and the chaos of the revolution, the PSII was sufficiently esteemed and recognized by Indonesians that it constituted a reasonable alternative to Masjumi. The PSII's support allowed Amir Sjarifuddin to credibly claim that his cabinet had Muslim support and representation. See Fogg, *Indonesia's Islamic Revolution*, 195–205.

[16] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 72.

Unfortunately, Amir found himself trapped in the same bind that Sjahrir had been. Despite Amir's belligerent rhetoric, he eventually negotiated the even more unpopular Renville agreement of January 1948. This was in turn effectively voided by the second Dutch "police action" of December 1948, Operation Kraai. Amir was popularly blamed for negotiating the Renville agreement, and the subsequent withdrawal of PNI and Masjumi support for his cabinet forced him to resign on January 23, 1948. The Sajap Kiri, finding itself in the awkward position of supporting Amir while disagreeing emphatically with Renville, underwent a paradoxical transformation: it reconstituted itself as the Front Demokrasi Rakjat (FDR, People's Democratic Front). The FDR opposed the Hatta cabinet that had replaced Amir's government in early 1948, while Hatta had the unenviable task of enforcing the unpopular Renville agreement that Amir had negotiated. The FDR's formation also caused the hitherto united Socialist Party to split into two factions, one under Sjahrir and another under Amir, with only Amir's faction remaining in the FDR.

When the veteran PKI leader and doctrinaire Stalinist Musso returned to Indonesia in August 1948, much of the FDR—the PKI in particular—gravitated toward his leadership. Amir, with his popularity at low ebb and the FDR's military strength sapped by Hatta's policy of military rationalization,[17] declared that he had been a Communist all along and proclaimed his support for Musso's policy of amalgamating all Marxist organizations within the PKI. Musso's sudden galvanization of the FDR culminated in the Madiun affair of September 1948. Local clashes between FDR militias and pro-government forces in Solo and Yogyakarta metastasized into a power struggle between the Hatta government and FDR. The FDR, fearful of further government repression after its units in Solo were neutralized, consolidated its forces in its last remaining stronghold of Madiun. In the process of doing so, it took over governmental functions in Madiun, which gave the appearance of a rebellion against central republican authority. The Hatta government, wary of a potential PKI uprising and how this would weaken its position vis-à-vis the Dutch, responded swiftly and decisively, declaring the FDR in rebellion against the republic and sending in the army to crush the FDR at Madiun.

[17] Hatta's policy of rationalization entailed the consolidation of the armed forces by discharging unnecessary manpower from both the army and various militias. This was done to reduce military expenditure, reduce graft, and increase the government's control over military units. This was perfectly sensible given the republic's precarious finances as well as the chronic shortage of functional weapons in nearly all republican divisions, but it had the effect of alienating thousands of *pemuda* whose revolutionary zeal had compelled them to enlist en masse in 1945 and 1946.

Meanwhile, in the aftermath of the Renville agreement, the Hatta government enjoyed the support of Tan Malaka's core following. Tan Malaka's allies in the PP and Benteng Republik were reconstituted as the Gerakan Revolusi Rakjat (GRR, People's Revolutionary Movement) in 1948. Despite embracing a policy platform very similar to Amir's FDR, the GRR lent its support to Hatta's government and its continued pursuit of negotiations with the Dutch.[18] As with the PP, the GRR included a variety of Muslim organizations, including Masjumi, though this did not mean that Masjumi was willing to support a Tan Malaka–led cabinet should the opportunity arise. The main points of concordance among the members of this loose coalition were support for the Hatta government and opposition to the FDR. Days before the republican army moved on the FDR in Madiun, the PP leaders were released from jail, where they had languished since mid-1946. This took the wind out of the FDR's sails, since the PP had a strong claim to being patriotically anti-*diplomasi* as well as distinctly Marxist. The GRR, with its leadership now restored, participated enthusiastically in the suppression of the FDR in Madiun, despite the similarities between the policy platforms of both coalitions.[19]

The PKI in Transition

The evolution of the PKI during the revolution merits a brief discussion, given its conspicuous lack of prominence in the major republican coalitions, even though virtually every major republican faction was influenced by Marxist ideas. From the beginning of the revolution until September 1948, the PKI evolved in dialogue with the other Marxist organizations in the Sajap Kiri / FDR and the PP/GRR, such as the Socialist Party and the PBI. Unsurprisingly, its postwar trajectory was deeply conditioned by its revolutionary experiences of coevolution and internecine conflict. The revolution was a transitionary phase for the PKI as it sought to re-establish itself after a long period of semidormancy; underground Communist organizations had developed on independent trajectories in the years since 1927.[20]

[18] Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, 266–67.

[19] Ann Swift, *The Road to Madiun: The Indonesian Communist Uprising of 1948* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1989), 113–20; Harry Poeze, *Madiun 1948: PKI Bergerak* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia and KITLV Jakarta, 2011), 131.

[20] Kankan Xie, "Estranged Comrades: Global Networks of Indonesian Communism, 1926–32" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2018).

Interorganization coordination was limited out of necessity, structured as they were in self-contained cells, which was perfectly sensible in the repressive climate of Dutch and Japanese surveillance. Communist splinter groups included Tan Malaka's PARI network, Musso's "illegal PKI" founded in 1935, the anti-Japanese PKI underground that received Amir Sjarifuddin's help, and Muhammad Jusuf's PKI, which had grown out of a Japanese-sponsored organization and was active during the early revolution.[21] The FDR provided a focal point around which the PKI could regroup, thus attracting Musso's attention as the best point of insertion for his influence. However, the FDR was constantly undermined by the many Marxists grouped within the PP/GRR, who also positioned themselves as heirs to the pre-1926 PKI, but who saw no need to obey directives from Moscow nor negotiate with the Dutch.

Musso was the only PKI leader who favored unambiguous alignment with Moscow. Perhaps the most obvious indication of this was the PKI Central Committee's decision, at the PKI conference of August 26–27, 1948, to sponsor the creation of a mass organization called Lembaga Persahabatan Indonesia-Soviet Uni (Foundation for Indonesian-Soviet Friendship).[22] This was undertaken at a time when Musso's influence over the PKI was at its peak, and reflected Musso's insistence that the USSR was the "the leader and vanguard of all anti-imperialist struggles across the world."[23] Unlike Musso, the generation of PKI leaders who came to political maturity during the revolution, such as D. N. Aidit, Luqman, Njoto, and Sudisman, were "locally born" Communists. Grounded in the realities of privation during the Japanese occupation and the Indonesian Revolution, they had a strong understanding of conditions on the ground but were initially handicapped by their lack of facility with Marxist theory.[24] Sustained exposure to formal Marxist theory only came after ex-Digoel internees returned from Australia, and Indonesian Communists returned from Holland after the Second World War.[25] Unlike Alimin, Musso, Semaun and Darsono, these younger leaders had not spent long years in Europe or Moscow and were therefore not beholden to the USSR ideologically, financially, or emotionally. They were less inclined to accept discipline and direction from Moscow, although Moscow remained

[21] Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, 158–59.
[22] Polit-Biro Central Comite Partai Komunis Indonesia, *Djalan Baru Untuk Republik Indonesia* (Jakarta: Jajasan Pembaruan, 1953), 14.
[23] Ibid., 18.
[24] Soerjono and Anderson, "On Musso's Return," 66–67.
[25] Ibid.

deeply interested in influencing PKI policy.[26] This set the stage for creative and adaptive approaches to Indonesian Communism, even as they identified affectively with global Communist movement and deployed the language of proletarian solidarity. This younger generation of leaders observed and participated in the internecine struggles of the revolution, drawing their own conclusions about how the PKI should be organized. These observations and experiences later guided their policy decisions and political rhetoric when they came to power after independence.

Even among the 1926–27 generation of PKI exiles, there were many signs of "heterodoxy": Semaun elected to remain in USSR until the late 1950s, while Darsono quickly renounced the postrevolution PKI. Alimin returned to Indonesia in 1946 and sat on the politburo of the central committee for years, but his influence was steadily eroded by Aidit until his failing health allowed Aidit to shunt him into an honorable sinecure in 1959.[27] The PKI of the revolution had as fresh a start as it was possible to have. While many former Digoel internees returned to the party during the revolution—notably, Xarim M. S. and Bachtaruddin in Sumatra—Alimin and Musso were the only substantial link to the top leadership of the pre-1926 generation, and Musso's influence over the PKI ended with the Madiun affair. Both before and after Musso's brief tenure, the PKI was mostly free to explore new possibilities, and to conceive how it would fit into the broader republican project. While the last remaining pre-1926 veteran, Alimin, did play a role in this process, it was fundamentally driven by a younger generation of leaders such as Tan Ling Djie, Aidit, Sudisman, Lukman, and Njoto. Even Sajuti Melik, a member of Tan Malaka's Murba Party, described the ideological flexibility of the new generation with grudging respect:

> The PKI's situation under Aidit and his friends was different [from the 1920s PKI]. The Politburo consisted of Aidit, Nyoto, Sudisman, and Alimin. In their application of Marx's and Lenin's ideology, they were also influenced by the People's Republic of China. They gave greater emphasis to cultural factors, religious conditions, and population demographics in agricultural areas, such that the interests of farmers were prioritized, in accordance with Mao's ideas.[28]

[26] Efimova, "Stalin and the Revival of the Communist Party of Indonesia," 108.
[27] Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia*, 67.
[28] Sayuti Melik and Arief Priyadi, *Wawancara Dengan Sayuti Melik* (Jakarta: Yayasan Proklamasi Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1986), 113.

The internecine struggles of the revolution and sustained competition with other Marxist organizations pushed the PKI to formulate new strategies to achieve and hold political power, including how to burnish the PKI's republican credentials after the fratricide at Madiun. With Madiun hanging over their heads, it was not surprising that the PKI under Aidit, Njoto, and Lukman worked hard to present a conciliatory image toward all religions, framing opposition to imperialism as both a religious and Communist ethical concern.[29] The PKI would go on to become a powerful force in Indonesia politics after independence, and its revolutionary experiences would powerfully influence how it positioned itself in the 1950s.

The deaths of Amir and Musso in September 1948, and the death of Tan Malaka in February 1949, marked an inflection point in the development of Indonesian Marxism. No longer would iconic leaders who exercised almost totemic influence over left-leaning republicans compete with Aidit's generation. Simultaneously, the nondogmatic Communists that had gathered around Tan Malaka were left bereft of an effective leader on the national stage after his death; they were deprived of his powerful brand, second only to the Soekarno-Hatta duumvirate. The PKI was thus relieved of its most prominent pre-1926 leaders, and their Marxist competitors were in disarray. In such conditions, a new generation of PKI leaders would come to the fore, bringing their own creative political visions for Indonesia. As will become clear in this chapter and the next, these visions were willing to go to significant lengths to accommodate Islam.

Tan Malaka's Partisans: *Soeara Merdeka*, Sajuti Melik, and the Murba Party

Tan Malaka's followers were spread across different parties and organizations for most of the revolution, until the formation of Partai Murba consolidated his most loyal supporters. The Murba Party was founded in the republican capital of Yogyakarta on November 7, 1948, in response to the effective collapse of the FDR in the Madiun affair of September 1948.[30] Tan Malaka never

[29] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 148.

[30] Notably, November 7 (Gregorian calendar) was the anniversary of the October Revolution of 1917: global proletarian solidarity was the Murba Party's worldview despite its rejection of subservience to the USSR.

lacked Muslim support: the Benteng Republik / PP included many prominent Muslim parties and *laskar* like Masjumi and its affiliates. Tan Malaka and his key supporters were detained on July 3, 1946, as a result of a failed attempt to seize leadership of the republic. This detention was to last until September 1948, shortly before the Madiun affair. Tan Malaka remained influential even while incarcerated. He continued to provide his supporters with broad guidance, conveyed via smuggled correspondence. Throughout the revolution, his supporters remained committed to their policy of pursuing unconditional independence.

Tan Malaka's support base was firmly rooted in the unions. The PP enjoyed the consistent support of veteran unionists such as Sjamsoe Harja Udaja and Soebroto Danoehoesodo, both of whom were key leaders in the Barisan Boeroeh Indonesia (BBI) and the Sarekat Buruh Gula (SBG, Sugar Workers Union).[31] Interestingly, some unionists, like the prominent PBI member Daljono, would eventually switch their allegiances from Tan Malaka to Masjumi; Daljono even became a founding member of the Muslim labor union SBII (Serikat Buruh Islam Indonesia, Indonesian Islamic Workers Union) in 1948.[32] The ease with which that shift occurred—factional realignments were characteristic of the revolutionary period—suggests that Tan Malaka's supporters' and Masjumi supporters' views overlapped significantly when it came to labor rights and religion. Tan Malaka's brand of adaptive, Indonesian-specific Communism had significant appeal: the SBG alone could muster the support of approximately thirty-four thousand permanent workers and eighty thousand seasonal workers by early 1947.[33] Even accounting for the fact that these numbers might be inflated, and that not all SBG members agreed with their leadership's support for the PP, these numbers are too large to dismiss out of hand, especially since sugar was one of the republic's few lucrative commodities. It would be fair to say that this appeal had something to do with the PP's overt detachment from international Communism, its accommodation of religion, and its insistence on unconditional independence.

[31] Colin Brown, "The Politics of Trade Union Formation in the Java Sugar Industry, 1945–1949," *Modern Asian Studies* 28, no. 1 (February 1994): 83–88. Sjamsoe was so committed to Tan Malaka that he would leave the BBI over the PBI's support for Amir's policy of negotiating with the Dutch, forming a splinter movement known as the PNI-Merdeka, which would later become one of the constituent elements of the Partai Murba. The SBG would remain pro-PP until April 1948, when Sjamsoe was ejected and the union came under PKI dominance.

[32] Ibid., 87.

[33] Ibid., 89.

The PP was diverse, and its supporters had complex motivations. Some were simply outraged by the ineffectual policy of negotiations with the Dutch, which had yielded few benefits but made many territorial and strategic concessions. This outrage was understandable, since the Linggadjati and Renville agreements had been voided by two "police actions," which indicated the Dutch negotiated in bad faith and still hoped to crush the republic militarily. Others, however, had more self-serving motivations. Some joined PP and its successor coalitions to better jockey for political positions, or in an attempt to bring down Sjahrir's or Amir's cabinets in the hope that they might replace them. It is therefore difficult to paint a definitive portrait of PP ideology. Nevertheless, certain newspapers were known to be highly sympathetic to the PP and can be analyzed for the tenor of PP discourse. At the very least, newspapers such as these serve as a rough barometer of the kind of ideas that were circulating among the political opposition for the duration of Sjahrir's and Amir's unified Partai Sosialis (PS, Socialist Party) governments (November 1945–January 1948), which spanned most of the revolution.

Soeara Merdeka (The Voice of Freedom, 1945–47) was very close to the PP, consistently supporting labor unions and endorsing socialism.[34] Some articles, for example, performed the didactic function of explaining Rousseau's social contract in simple terms, focusing on the role that organized labor had to play in the unspoken social contract.[35] It explained the importance of the right to strike, and argued that organized labor would function as a bulwark against the rise to power of dictators like Napoleon or Hitler.[36] Such articles served to legitimize the many debilitating strikes that occurred on government-run plantations and mines during the revolution, which were born of genuine hardship and also perfectly legal. Unfortunately, these were often suppressed, given the dire financial straits in which the republic usually found itself. Other articles proclaimed that "democracy and socialism are the foundations of the Indonesian state," and that "the Indonesian working class [*kaoem boeroeh*] condemns capitalism and calls for the establishment of a government based on socialist values."[37] At the same time, *Soeara Merdeka* also published articles that openly embraced the revolutionary role of Islam, such as one article contributed by the *dakwah* section of Masjumi's Priangan

[34] Smail, *Bandung in the Early Revolution, 1945–46*, 46.
[35] Soemadi, "Menghadapi Kongres Boeroeh," *Soeara Merdeka*, November 2, 1945.
[36] Ibid.
[37] B. A., "Mendjelaskan Politik," *Soeara Merdeka*, November 2, 1945; Anonymous, "Selagi Tani Djajahan Masih Ada, *Soeara Merdeka*, November 7, 1945.

branch. This article was deeply exhortative and rhetorical, framing resistance to the Dutch in specifically Islamic terms.[38] It even called on all republicans to "put your faith in Allah, who will delivery victory unto us."[39] Islamic identity and socialist politics could and did coexist on the same page, within the context of revolutionary solidarity.

Soeara Merdeka sometimes espoused solidarity with Marxist movements both domestic and foreign, alongside declamations of solidarity with Islamic organizations. It published articles explaining that Australian labor unions supported Indonesian independence, while other articles proclaimed solidarity with striking dockworkers in Singapore.[40] It also republished articles from *Pravda*, the official press organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, including one condemning European attempts to reassert control over their former colonies.[41] Articles like these sat cheek by jowl with other articles that celebrated the formation in Garut of an Islamic *laskar*, the Barisan Moedjahidin (Holy Warriors' Front), which *Soeara Merdeka* hailed for "defending religion and strengthening the republic."[42] One article contributed by Masjumi's Priangan branch even called for "solidarity across the international working class," advocating the "establishment of a socialist state."[43] This last article is also exhorted readers to "trust in Allah to assure victory," providing encouraging quotations from both the Qur'an and selected hadith, rendered in Arabic and Indonesian. *Soeara Merdeka*'s audience was conceived of as both ummah and proletariat, and it drew inspiration from both.

In 1947, a flood destroyed *Soeara Merdeka*'s printing press, and it split into two newspapers: *Soeara Merdeka* and *Perdjuangan Kita*.[44] After the flood, *Soeara Merdeka* evolved into a daily broadsheet that was more factual and less clearly partisan. It carried reportage from international wire news agencies like the Associated Press, as well as Indonesia's Antara, and provided

[38] Masjoemi daerah Priangan bagian da'wah, "Perdjoangan Oemat Islam," *Soeara Merdeka*, November 1, 1945.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Anonymous, "Kebentjian Kepada Belanda Meloeas," *Soeara Merdeka*, November 3, 1945; Anonymous, "Apa Maksoed Kaoem Boeroeh Dok Singapoera?," *Soeara Merdeka*, November 3, 1945.
[41] Anonymous, "Soal Koloni-koloni haroes lekas diselesaikan: Anjoeran Pravda," *Soeara Merdeka*, November 6, 1945.
[42] Anonymous, "Barisan Boeroeh Indonesia Garoet," *Soeara Merdeka*, November 3, 1945; Anonymous, "Barisan Moedjahidin," *Soeara Merdeka*, November 3, 1945.
[43] Masjoemi Daerah Priangan bagian da'wah, "Perdjoangan dan Pengorbanan," *Soeara Merdeka*, November 7, 1945.
[44] Smail, *Bandung in the Early Revolution, 1945–46*, 142. No issues of Perdjuangan Kita survive; it is not to be confused with Sjahrir's famous tract with the same title.

strong coverage of global events. Recurring topics included developments in US-USSR relations, anticolonial efforts in India and Burma, as well as the contemporaneous Chinese and Greek civil wars. *Soeara Merdeka* retained a discernible pro-labor orientation while consistently expressing solidarity with Muslim republicans. One article reported glowingly on the formation of Sentral Organisasi Koperasi Ra'jat Indonesia (SOKRI, Indonesian People's Central Cooperatives Organization), explaining that SOKRI would help found more badly needed peasant cooperatives across Indonesia.[45] Throughout 1947, nearly every issue included one or two articles on the gains made by labor movements across the world, while coverage of the newly founded International Labor Organization's early initiatives to codify fair labor practices was also routine. At the same time, *Soeara Merdeka* also celebrated the achievements of Islamic organizations such as the Perserikatan Oemat Islam (Ummah Union), which it hailed for founding new Islamic schools (madrasahs) in the Bandung area.[46] *Soeara Merdeka*'s continued Marxist sympathies were evident in an article titled "Rombongan Penghabisan dari Digoel," which celebrated the return of the last batch of Partindo and PKI ex-internees from Boven Digoel—most of whom spent the Second World War in Australia—to republican territory, hailing them for "lending their strength to the republic."[47] *Soeara Merdeka*'s visibly international perspective made clear to its readers that the Indonesian proletariat were not alone; they were conceived of in terms of a broader world of proletarian solidarity, a world that included actors as diverse as the French Communist Party and former PKI Digoel internees. This world coexisted alongside, and even overlapped with, Indonesian nationhood, an imagined community expansive enough to accommodate Muslim republicans as comrades in the revolutionary struggle.

This imbrication of Islam and Marxism was also evident in other PP-sympathetic newspapers, such as *Kedaoelatan Rakjat*, published in the republican capital of Yogyakarta from late 1945 onward.[48] Mrázek describes *Kedaoelatan Rakjat* as supportive of Tan Malaka, and it regularly ran advertisements and announcements concerning Tan Malaka's writings, such as his brochure *Politik*, which was published in December 1945.[49] In

[45] Anonymous, "Sentral Organisasi Kop. Ra'jat Indonesia," *Soeara Merdeka*, July 14, 1947.
[46] Anonymous, "Pelantikan POI," *Soeara Merdeka*, July 12, 1947.
[47] "Anonymous, "Rombongan Penghabisan dari Digoel," *Soeara Merdeka*, July 12, 1947.
[48] This was a daily broadsheet to which S. K. Trimurti often contributed articles, and is not to be confused with the 1930s Pendidikan newspaper of the same name.
[49] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 311.

Kedaoelatan Rakjat, articles on the benefits of socialism in the USSR were juxtaposed against contributions by Masjumi branches, which called on readers to "pray that Allah will unite us in our resolve [to achieve independence]."[50] *Kedaoelatan Rakjat* conceived of its audience as part of a global proletarian movement: it republished articles from the British Communist newspaper *Daily Worker* that supported striking unions in the UK and lauded the Chinese Communist Party's military successes in China.[51] At the same time, it consistently addressed Muslim readers directly: one article from the October 15, 1945, issue in explicitly religious terms exhorted Muslims to take up arms against the Dutch, while another "prayed to Allah to guarantee the independence of Indonesia."[52] Such articles shared space on this daily broadsheet over and over again, with no apparent discordance. The revolution provided a discursive space in which Islam and Marxism were not assumed to be at loggerheads. This was perhaps necessitated by the pressing need for republican unity, but it was only possible at all because pergerakan activists like Tan Malaka had already been insisting on conciliation for decades.

Tan Malaka, the PP's ideological lodestone and revolutionary symbol sans pareil to many others, consistently emphasized the necessity of reconciling Islam to Communism during the revolution, so it is not surprising that *Soeara Merdeka* and *Kedaoelatan Rakjat* took the positions they did. One of the last books published before his death was *Islam Dalam Tindjauan Madilog* (1948), loosely translatable as "Islam as Critiqued by Dialectical Materialism," *Madilog* being a portmanteau of materialism, dialectic, and logic. In it, Tan Malaka suggested that Islam acclimatized itself to local conditions as it spread outside of Arabia but remained essentially coherent through the ummah's interaction via the hajj pilgrimage.[53] This acknowledgment of legitimate diversity paralleled his focus on the *murba* rather than the narrower category of the urban proletariat: just as Islam had an Indonesian articulation, Indonesian Marxism was its own beast. He also couched his message in a clearly Islamic idiom. He began by providing a short history of Islam in terms familiar to any Muslim, referencing the four Rashidun caliphs, the prophets Ibrahim, Musa, and Daud, the four main schools (*mazhab*) of

[50] Anonymous, "Sistem sosialisme ternjata baik sekali," *Kedaoelatan Rakjat*, October 9, 1945; Masjumi Cabang Djokdjakarta, "Sholat Hadjat," *Kedaoelatan Rakjat*, October 9, 1945.

[51] Anonymous, "Lemahnja Kedudukan Belanda," *Kedaoelatan Rakjat*, October 10, 1945.

[52] Masjumi Daerah Jogjakarta, "Kaoem Muslimin Indonesia angkat sendjata," *Kedaoelatan Rakjat*, October 15, 1945; Anonymous, "Solat Hadjad Menegakkan Agama Allah dan Kemerdekaan Indonesia," *Kedaoelatan Rakjat*, October 15, 1945.

[53] Tan Malaka, *Islam Dalam Tindjauan Madilog* (Djakarta: Widjaya, 1950), 6.

jurisprudence, the Mutazili school of theology (which had prioritized human reason in interpreting Islamic law), as well as the famed Imam al-Ghazali.[54] He made a point of adding the suffix "S.A.W." (an acronym for "Peace Be upon Him" transliterated from Arabic) to Muhammad's name whenever the Prophet was mentioned. By invoking these key markers of Islamic identity, Tan Malaka signaled his immersion in an Islamic milieu, despite his ideological commitment to Communism.

The majority of *Islam Dalam Tindjauan Madilog* focused the historical development of Islam vis-à-vis other phenomena in world history, and Tan Malaka's stance on Islam was visibly orthodox. Much of the book was a paean to Islam rather than an actual exposition of *Madilog*, Tan Malaka's nuanced reformulation of dialectical materialism.[55] That Islam was a central pillar around which his story revolved was obvious when he evaluated the young prophet Muhammad in relation to Isaac Newton and Thomas Edison; unsurprisingly, Muhammad fared favorably in his comparison.[56] It was only in his final paragraph that Tan Malaka made his message clear: he argued that *Madilog* admitted the existence of God, and recognized God's sovereignty over nature (*Jadi menurut Madilog yang Maha Kuasa itulah bisa lebih kuasa dari undang alam*).[57] Tan Malaka's *Aksi Massa* (1925) had been an expression of the practical value of accommodating Islam within a Communist ideological framework; *Islam Dalam Tindjauan Madilog* (1948) was aimed squarely at Muslims, and openly championed the metaphysical compatibility of Communism and Islam.

All of this was consistent with Tan Malaka's instructions to his GRR supporters on the ideal characteristics of a "people's party," written on July 31, 1948, in Magelang jail.[58] This was a prototype for what would eventually become the Murba Party. He argued that a people's party should use "appropriate tools" and not simply follow foreign examples. He wrote approvingly of the independent-minded "perspective" (*sikap*) embraced by Yugoslavia's Josip Broz Tito, the Swiss Communist Party, and the Southern German Communist Party, arguing that these examples should guide the Partai

[54] Ibid., 7.
[55] See Tan Malaka, *Madilog: Materialime Dialektika Logika* (Djakarta: Widjaya, 1951).
[56] Tan Malaka, *Islam Dalam Tindjauan Madilog*, 9.
[57] Ibid., 15.
[58] Tan Malaka, *Pandangan Dan Langkah Partai Rakjat: Surat Kepada Partai Rakjat* (Djakarta: Pustaka Murba, 1948).

Rakjat's relationship with the Cominform.[59] He even referenced a 1947 statement by Stalin as well as Andrei Zhdanov's address to the Ninth Cominform Congress of 1947, to the effect that Communist parties should no longer be controlled from the center (i.e., Moscow), as they had been under the Third International.[60] Tan Malaka perceived the Partai Buruh Merdeka (Independent Labor Party) and Acoma as the core of a future people's party, but emphasized the importance of a "long-term policy" that would build a "broader social basis" for said party.[61]

Tan Malaka had been formulating a nondogmatic, flexible, and adaptive approach to Communism for decades by 1949. This was a Communism that did profess solidarity with the global Communist and socialist movements, but which fiercely asserted its right to determine relevant ideology and policy domestically. The implication was that Indonesians alone knew what was best for Indonesia. These ideas had currency beyond Tan Malaka and his trusted lieutenants. Muhammad Yamin, who had founded the prewar leftist party Gerindo with Amir Sjarifuddin and Sanusi Pane, published a hagiography of Tan Malaka during the revolution. In it, Yamin lamented the split between Sarekat Islam and the PKI during the 1920s, warning that Muslim and Marxist republicans should follow the example set by the PP so as to avoid repeating past mistakes.[62] Yamin had a long history of involvement with Tan Malaka, covertly aiding Tan Malaka's PARI during the 1930s.[63] Yamin's was the kind of ideological framework that facilitated conciliation between Communism and Islam, especially given the exigencies of revolution, but with deep roots stretching back to the 1920s.

Tan Malaka's ideas about the necessity of reconciling Islam and Marxism were obliquely reflected in the Murba Party's publications. Though small, the Murba Party was not insignificant: founding members included twelve members of the KNIP, the de facto republican parliament, two of whom were even members of the KNIP's working committee.[64] The foundational documents of the Murba Party, published in 1950 but originally written in

[59] Here, "Southern German Communist Party" likely refers to Eugen Levine's Bavarian branch of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), which proclaimed the short-lived Bavarian Socialist Republic in 1919.
[60] Ibid., 1.
[61] Ibid., 2.
[62] Muhammad Yamin, *Tan Malaka Bapak Republic Indonesia* (Djawa Timoer: Moerba Berdjoang, 1946), 13.
[63] Leon Salim, "Interview with Leon Salim," interview by Audrey Kahin, June 8, 1985, 2.
[64] Partai Murba, *Istilah Murba, Anggaran Dasar, Anggaran Rumah Tangga, Dan Rentjana Konstitusi Partai Murba* (Djakarta: Sekretariat Dewan Partai "Partai Murba," 1950).

1948, convey the organization's nondogmatic Marxism. The Murba Party's charter repeatedly spelled out its commitment to some tenets of Marxism, but conspicuously neglected to mention historical materialism or scientific socialism. They asserted that Murba was "a party based on antifascism, anti-imperialism, and anticapitalism," which worked "toward a just and prosperous society . . . that is, a socialist society."[65] This was immediately followed by a promise to the uphold the 1945 constitution, specifically committing itself to upholding the principle of the belief in one God (*Ketuhanan Jang Maha Esa*), without any mention of Pancasila.[66] This was remarkable, since *Ketuhanan Jang Maha Esa* was not merely invoked as part of the Pancasila formula; the Murba Party was explicitly comfortable with accommodating monotheistic religions in its vision of a socialist society. This was not entirely surprising, since one of the Murba Party's most prominent founding members, Sajuti Melik, was simultaneously a devout Muslim, a Soekarno loyalist (having served as Soekarno's private secretary, he drafted the proclamation of independence in that capacity), and a former Digoel internee with impeccable nationalist credentials.

Sajuti Melik had as fine a pergerakan pedigree as it was possible to have. As a young man in Surakarta (Solo) and Yogyakarta in the 1920s, he had studied under Ki Hadjar Dewantara of Taman Siswa fame, as well as his close associate and pergerakan sympathizer, the Dutch teacher H. A. Zurink.[67] These sympathies were known to the authorities, and Zurink was eventually deported in 1924 while many of his former students—including Sajuti Melik—were detained and interrogated by the PID. More important, however, was Melik's connection to the Islamic Communist Haji Misbach. Late in life, Melik would reminisce that he had two teachers in the realm of politics: Zurink had been the first, and Misbach the second.[68] Zurink had gotten Melik interested in politics, which led him to read Misbach's newspapers, *Islam Bergerak* and *Medan Moeslimin*; this prompted him to seek out Misbach and become his student.[69] He recalled with amusement that it was Misbach who first introduced him to historical materialism, telling Melik that he should study Marx's historical materialism because it was very similar to Islamic teachings.[70] Shuttling between Surakarta and Yogyakarta, Melik also

[65] Ibid., 3.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Sayuti Melik and Arief Priyadi, *Wawancara Dengan Sayuti Melik*, 8.
[68] Ibid., 9.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid., 10.

studied Marxism with Darsono, Subakat, and Aliarcham, some of the most prominent PKI leaders of the pre-1926 period; he joined the PKI's Cilacap section in March 1924 and served as its secretary at the tender age of fifteen.[71] At the same time, he joined Muhammadiyah to deepen his knowledge of Islam.[72] There was something poetic about Melik's pergerakan "apprenticeship" with Zurink and Misbach. He learned his anticolonial resistance from both Europe and the Indies, neatly symbolizing the two lineages, or two souls, of the pergerakan. This even mirrored his family background: Melik's father was a minor civil servant of the *inlands bestuur* (native service), but his family was devoutly Muslim, with several uncles trained as ulama.[73]

It was unsurprising that a student of Misbach's would end up as a supporter of Tan Malaka and Soekarno, both of whose broad, synthesizing visions accommodated Islam and Marxism. Melik's first contact with Tan Malaka's ideas came in 1926, when he read a clandestine copy of *Naar de Republiek Indonesia*.[74] Given his close association with so many Communists, Melik was arrested and exiled to Digoel in 1927, where he would languish until 1933. He was released at the ripe old age of twenty-five. He would continue to be involved with anticolonial activism throughout the 1930s, joining Gerindo in 1937 after his release from two years of detention first by the British Special Branch in Malaya and then by the Indies police in Java.[75] After his release, he married the labor activist and fellow Gerindo member S. K. Trimurti—also a staunch Muslim—in 1938. Both contributed articles to pergerakan newspapers like *Sinar Selatan* (Light of the South) during the 1930s, and published a newspaper, *Pesat* (Fast), together in the late 1930s. The stridently anticolonial character of their writings led to them being periodically charged with *persdelict*, and both were incarcerated several times during the last years of Dutch rule.

By the time the revolution began, Melik was already a hardened pergerakan journalist. No stranger to suffering for his beliefs, he had long been exposed to Marxist ideas and was possessed of a supportive family as well as strong personal connections to the top tier of republican leadership. Choosing to support Tan Malaka and his rejection of *diplomasi*, Melik joined the GRR

[71] Shiraishi, *The Phantom World of Digul*, 269.
[72] Sayuti Melik and Arief Priyadi, *Wawancara Dengan Sayuti Melik*, 10.
[73] Ibid., 9.
[74] Ibid., 13.
[75] Ibid., 20. Shiraishi notes Sajuti Melik's various connections to the PARI underground, via Amir Hamzah Siregar; to the Malayan Communist Party during his time as a laborer in Singapore; and possibly to the PKI Muda as well. See Shiraishi, *The Phantom World of Digul*, 269–72.

and later became a founding member of the Murba Party. He spoke of his revolutionary experiences in a stoically religious vein: he pointed out that the revolution's success was by no means assured, so each person had to choose the path that would best facilitate independence, "for only God can engender what happens or does not happen, in accordance with his divine power."[76] He also explained that he did not join the PKI during the revolution because he thought the PKI did not truly embrace Pancasila, but only saw it as a tool for unifying Indonesians: "The PKI's embrace of Pancasila was tactical rather than heartfelt."[77] For Melik, a cursory accommodation of Islam would not suffice—his faith was part and parcel of his politics, and no doubt some similarly minded people were drawn to Murba Party.

In the mid-1980s, Melik was interviewed by the journalist Arief Priyadi, and the transcript was later edited and published as a book. Although the book jacket and the introduction repeatedly stated that Melik was a practicing Muslim, an entire chapter was dedicated to Melik's understanding of Marxism. Melik began by explaining the etymological roots of key Marxist terms like "proletariat" and "commune," but focused particularly on explaining the importance of Hegelian dialectical materialism and Marx's adaptation of that concept as historical materialism. He demonstrated clear facility with Marxist theory, explaining with impressive clarity and succinctness how historical materialism illustrated the relationship between technological, structural, and economic developments, and epistemological changes in human societies from age to age, rather than presenting it as a schematic or teleological unfolding of history.[78] Melik approached Marxism as an analytical tool, and described it as a form of *ilmu pengetahuan* rather than a comprehensive dogma.[79] He did not approve of the USSR and the PRC's authoritarian political structures, and attributed their economic troubles to an "excessive reliance on the 'laws' of dialectical materialism, paying insufficient attention to other factors, including [the complexity of] human motivations."[80]

[76] Melik and Priyadi, *Wawancara Dengan Sayuti Melik*, 52.
[77] Ibid., 52–53.
[78] Ibid., 96–97.
[79] Ibid., 117. *Ilmu*, as explained in chapter 1, is a loan word from Arabic (*'ilm*, علم) which signifies knowledge, but it is a term with strong connotations of the formal Islamic sciences, as well as associations with mystical knowledge both Islamic and non-Islamic. *Pengetahuan* can signify understanding, but also science. Taken together, they signify something like an analytical framework.
[80] Ibid., 100.

On a similar note, he questioned the inevitability of the proletariat's violent revolt against capitalism, arguing that the common understanding of revolution as a violent upheaval was simplistic and fixated on "quantitative" instead of "qualitative" (i.e., structural) changes. He did accept that a socialist society would eventually prevail over capitalism, but not necessarily through the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.[81] The following quip by Melik encapsulates his ideological flexibility: "If a callow youth is not attracted to Marxism after being exposed to it, his brains are frozen [*otaknya beku*] . . . if an educated and experienced adult thinks Marxism is the best philosophy of all, this signifies that his brains are frozen."[82] It was such a fiercely nonconformist approach to Marxism that was supple enough to accommodate Melik's Islamic faith. Knowing that many of Tan Malaka's core supporters, like Muhammad Yamin and Iwa Koesoema Soemantri,[83] were also pious Muslims, we can reasonably assume that Sajuti Melik's views on Islam and Marxism were broadly representative of the Murba milieu.

This interview does have to be read carefully since Sajuti Melik's reminiscences during the 1980s are likely to have been colored by intervening decades and the political exigencies of living under Suharto's regime. It is still a useful source, however, because the ideas Melik expressed in the 1980s remained consonant with the ideological positions held by Tan Malaka and his supporters during the 1940s. Moreover, Melik remains credible because admitting to any kind Marxist inspiration was a decidedly unsafe proposition while Suharto was in power. Melik never attempted to obscure his connections to known Communists like Tan Malaka and Haji Misbach, although he may have had more latitude since he was "untainted" by association with Aidit's PKI. Though Melik's convictions in the 1980s may not be a fully accurate representation of the revolutionary milieu, the outlines of the picture he paints are demonstrably similar to articles published in pro-PP newspapers like *Soeara Merdeka*. It would not be unreasonable to infer that a significant segment of Indonesian society reconciled their Islamic faith and Marxist political inspirations much as Sajuti Melik did.

[81] Ibid., 101.
[82] Ibid., 112.
[83] Iwa Koesoema Soemantri was another anomalous Marxist who was considered sufficiently important to the PP that he was detained alongside Tan Malaka, Muhammad Yamin, Abdul Manaf (aka Achmad Soebardjo) during the July 3 Affair of 1946.

Amir Sjarifuddin and the Front Demokrasi Rakjat

Arrayed against Tan Malaka's PP was Amir Sjarifuddin's Front Demokrasi Rakjat (FDR, People's Democratic Front), which the then-tiny PKI was a part of. The FDR openly courted Muslim support for its diplomatic approach to securing independence, without much success. In January 1948, Amir resigned as prime minister due to the unpopularity of the Renville agreement he had negotiated, and Hatta formed a new government without Sajap Kiri support. Upon its foundation in February 1948, the FDR was still able to muster the support of a broad range of Marxists, although many were deeply skeptical of Renville. The formation of the FDR gave a greater voice to non–Socialist Party members in decision-making and policy formulation, whereas Sajap Kiri had tended to be dominated by the Socialist Party's party council.[84] It also marked the beginning of a policy transformation: the avowedly Marxist FDR coalition began to question the wisdom of continuing negotiations with the Dutch, a policy that the Sajap Kiri had tolerated even though Amir had pursued it with scant results.[85]

The organizations represented on the FDR secretariat were Amir's Partai Sosialis (PS, Socialist Party),[86] the Partai Buruh Indonesia (PBI, Indonesian Labor Party), the "legal" PKI (also known as the PKI Bintaran, so named for the location of its offices, and directly linked to the "illegal" or underground PKI), Pesindo (Pemuda Sosialis Indonesia, Socialist Youth of Indonesia), SOBSI (Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, Central All-Indonesian Workers Organization), and Laskar Rakjat (People's Militia).[87] These were some of the most important republican organizations, representing a broad spectrum of Indonesian society. Notable among the FDR's members were several devout Muslims who embraced Marxist politics, such as the BBI's S. K. Trimurti, the Socialist Party's Jusuf Muda Dalam, and the PKI's Nathar Zainuddin, the Islamic Communist who had published *Pemandangan Islam*

[84] Soerjono and Anderson, "On Musso's Return," 62.

[85] Ibid., 65. This and other disagreements eventually led the FDR's policy positions drifting into something strongly resembling the PP's; galvanized by Musso's return to Indonesia in 1948, components of the FDR, disappointed with Hatta's continued pursuit of negotiations, joined Musso's PKI in attempting to supplant Hatta's government in the Madiun affair.

[86] This was distinct from Sjahrir's Partai Sosialis Indonesia (PSI, Socialist Party of Indonesia), which did support Hatta's government. Sjahrir and Amir's combined socialist party had split in February 1948 upon the formation of the FDR.

[87] Soerjono and Anderson, "On Musso's Return," 64. Laskar Rakjat was part of the FDR with the exception of its West Java branch, which was led by the Chaerul Saleh, a Tan Malaka loyalist.

and *Djago! Djago!* in the 1920s.[88] One of the staff members of the FDR secretariat was Hasan Raid, an overt Muslim Communist, whose autobiography will be examined in chapter 4.[89] Even so, lacking the mass support of Muslim organizations limited the FDR's capacity to oppose government policy or convincingly argue for the adoption of its own.

One can glean a sense of the FDR's approach to Islam in Amir Sjarifuddin's *Ilmoe Pergaoelan Hidoep*, first published in 1947. The analysis of this text is undertaken with the caveat that the FDR was a diverse coalition that harbored many internal contradictions. Nevertheless, it would be fair to assume that *Ilmoe Pergaoelan Hidoep* represented or shaped the views of a significant proportion of FDR supporters, especially given Amir's consistently high prestige until January 1948.[90] *Ilmoe Pergaoelan Hidoep* was a pamphlet meant for mass consumption, and probably circulated among the relatively well-educated civil service and officer corps as well as the more cerebral *pemuda*. It struck an identifiably sociological note, defining *ilmoe pergaoelan hidoep* as the study of the individual's relationship with society. It was a Weberian exploration of the new gemeinschaft that the Indonesian republic should create, but also a reference to the *Communist Manifesto*: the first Indonesian translation of the manifesto had translated "relations of production" as *productiveverhoudingen* in Dutch and *pergaoelan hidoep* in Indonesian.[91] It was Amir's vision for Indonesia in its social rather than political aspect, concisely articulated in social scientific terms. This book was revealing of the revolution's inclusive tenor: even non-Muslim socialists like Amir, who had converted to Christianity in 1931, sought to articulate a social vision that could embrace Indonesia's heterogeneity and complex heritage (including Islam) in its entirety.

Amir's proposed gemeinschaft unreservedly accepted the relevance of religion to Indonesian society. He argued that Indonesia was a hybrid society with many cultural influences, all of which the republic ought to embrace, instead of the fascistic glorification of a past golden age, transmuted into a contemporary idiom.[92] Amir explicitly argued for the embrace of Indonesia's

[88] Ibid., 63, 68, 70. Jusuf Muda Dalam would eventually become a PKI member, but would leave the PKI for the PNI in 1954.
[89] Ibid., 71.
[90] Ibid., 74.
[91] Partondo, *Manifest Kommunist: Dimelajoeken Dan Ditambah Keterangan Oleh Partondo* (Semarang: Drukkerij VSTP, 1923).
[92] Amir Sjarifoeddin, *Ilmoe Pergaoelan Hidoep* (Yogyakarta: Kementerian Pertahanan Staf Pendidikan Politik Tentara, 1947), 36.

Hindic past, its courtly Muslim cultures and Islamic piety, and even its experience of Dutch and Japanese domination.[93] He rejected the notion that "East is East and West is West," and explicitly exhorted readers to participate in the formation of a new Indonesian subjectivity, by which he meant (re)defining the relationships between individuals and society in a way that Indonesians would find ethical and meaningful.[94] Amir made it clear that the relationship between individuals and societies that he supported was *sosialistisch*, or of a socialist nature.[95] According to him, Indonesian socialism would not be "enforced socialism, as has happened on the European continent, but rather a socialism that is truly compatible with Indonesian traditions (*adat istiadat*), which are still in evidence in different areas of the country, such as *gotong rojong*."[96] First, this was an obvious rejection of the USSR's forcible imposition of Communist governments across Eastern Europe, which signified Amir's independent-minded approach to formulating Indonesian socialism. Second, Amir recognized the enduring importance of organic Indonesian culture, which necessarily included Islam, while remaining committed to socialism (critiques of capitalism and its effects pepper the text). This was a call for a creative, relevant, and nondogmatic application of Marx's ideas in an Indonesian context. In that spirit, Amir was close to Tan Malaka and Hatta, even though they disagreed fiercely on policy during the revolution.

This framing was entirely consistent with Amir's prewar activities. Along with the journalist Mohammed Yamin and the poet-playwright Sanusi Pane, Amir had been a founding member of the left-leaning Gerindo in 1937; Gerindo was Parindra's successor and ostensibly willing to cooperate with the colonial state.[97] Gerindo's newspaper, *Kebangoenan* (1936–41), blended Islamic and Marxist concerns, reflecting the hybrid worldview of its editors as well as the interests of its readers. All three regularly contributed articles

[93] Ibid., 32.

[94] Ibid., 33. This is a reference to Rudyard Kipling's *The Ballad of East and West*, whose most famous lines ("Oh, East is East and West is West, and never shall the twain meet") have often been somewhat unfairly read to imply a straightforward justification of colonial racism. In this context, Amir was rejecting a long-established strain of pergerakan discourse (itself influenced by colonial scholarship) that posited the essential difference of "Eastern" civilizations, including Indonesia.

[95] Ibid., 36.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Adam Malik described Gerindo as a "vehicle to accommodate various views and streams from various political parties that were banned by the Dutch colonial government, that is Partindo, PNI, New PNI [Pendidikan], Pari, and PKI." See Adam Malik, *Mengabdi Republik, Jilid 1: Adam dari Andalas* (Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 1979). Moreover, Antara, a news agency founded by Gerindo members, clandestinely distributed samizdat such as Pari's newspaper *Obor* and PKI Muda's *Menara Merah* (Red Tower). See Shiraishi, *The Phantom World of Digul*, 257.

to the newspaper, with Amir and Pane serving as editors. *Kebangoenan* regularly reported on events in the Islamic world, such as a running column titled "Doenia Islam" (The World of Islam), as well as on Islamic events in Indonesia, such as the foundation of the Pemuda Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Youth) organization.[98] *Kebangoenan* even published an open letter from the editors in four installments on questions of *fiqh*, calling on readers to reconsider how they approached *fiqh*.[99] At the same time, this was a newspaper that advocated land rights for sharecroppers, published hagiographic biographies of French socialist leaders like Léon Blum, and condemned Stalin's purges of Lenin's closest associates, celebrating them instead as heroes of the Russian Revolution and civil war.[100] One memorable article by Sanusi Pane criticized the economic policies of the Indies government, concluding that "it doesn't matter whether you call an economic policy liberal or Communist as long as it promotes prosperity."[101] The Gerindo milieu was one of nondogmatic Marxists who were comfortable engaging with Islam or reflecting the Islamic concerns of their audience.

This worldview was very much in evidence in the writings of other FDR members as well. Abdulmadjid was a core Socialist Party leader who had represented his party first on the Sajap Kiri council (the Madjelis Lengkap) and later in the FDR as well.[102] He was a former member of the Communist Party of the Netherlands and the anti-Nazi underground, having joined during his time as a student in the late 1930s. He eventually sat on the politburo of the "illegal" PKI during the revolution.[103] In conjunction with Maisir Thaib, Abdulmadjid published a slim book titled *Mentjapai Masjarakat Sosialis* (Reaching a Socialist Society) in 1946.[104] This was a straightforward political manifesto for the Socialist Party, drawing heavily from the writings of Lenin, Mao, and Stalin. Nevertheless, the manifesto repeatedly stressed

[98] Anonymous, "Doenia Islam," *Kebangoenan*, June 5, 1936; Anonymous, "Pemoeda Islam Indonesia," *Kebangoenan*, May 11, 1937.

[99] Hassanbisri, "Soerat Terboeka III: Oesoel Fikih," *Kebangoenan*, May 4, 1937.

[100] M. Yamin, "Hak Tanah Indonesia, Sekarang dan Nanti," *Kebangoenan*, June 6, 1936; R. D., "Seni dan Pengetahoean," *Kebangoenan*, June 6, 1936; Persindo, "Dimana teman-temannja Lenin?," *Kebangoenan*, May 7, 1937.

[101] Sanusi Pane, "Garis Haloean Ekonomi," *Kebangoenan,* May 12, 1937.

[102] Soerjono and Anderson, "On Musso's Return," 63.

[103] Ibid., 64.

[104] Maisir Thaib, who also went by the pseudonym Martha, was something of a dilletante in both Islam and Marxism. He was educated in the Sumatra Thawalib school in Parabek and later at the PGAI normal school in Padang. He went on to run a modernist Islamic school himself while working as an author and journalist, contributing articles to the Muslim Communist Xarim M. S.'s newspaper, *Penjedar*. After a stint in jail in Bandung in 1941 at age twenty-two, he became affiliated with the Sumatran Pendidikan. For more on Maisir Thaib, see Horton, "History Unhinged," 68–70.

that the Socialist Party would "respect the national culture as well each and every religion," even enshrining it within the party's principles.[105]

Although Amir was no Islamic Communist, he was the chief leader of a republican coalition that included many Muslims who embraced Marxist ideas. His pamphlet is important insofar as it reveals a worldview that was common, perhaps even dominant, during the revolution. It represented a creative, adaptive approach to Marxism, accommodating it within Indonesia's existing social structures and projected needs. These structures and needs necessarily included Islam, since many of Amir's supporters were themselves devout Muslims. Such frames of reference allowed conciliations of Islam and Marxism, though not necessarily in the form of the explicit Islamic Communism practiced by Haji Misbach. Amir's was a broad and inclusive vision for Indonesian nationhood, much like the vision Soekarno had optimistically articulated in *Nationalism, Islam and Marxism* (1926). This vision was self-confident enough to selectively incorporate Marxism, Islam, the European enlightenment, Hinduism, Christianity, indigenous cultures, and any number of other influences. Given this political climate, it was hardly surprising that so many leftists across the political spectrum, from Sajuti Melik (GRR) and S. K. Trimurti (FDR) to Hatta and Soekarno (not officially aligned, but sympathetic to Sjahrir and the Sajap Kiri), saw no contradiction between their Islamic faith and Marxist inspirations; it was so normalized and uncontentious that they often saw no need to address it at all.

The "Religious Socialists": Muslim Revolutionaries and Marxism

In the 1950s, George Kahin identified several Masjumi politicians as "religious socialists," particularly Mohammed Natsir and Sjafruddin Prawiranegara (see Figures 3.2 and 3.3).[106] More recent scholars of Masjumi such as Remy Madinier and Kevin Fogg have generally concurred. Madinier's in-depth study of Masjumi identified an even broader group of progressive politicians in Masjumi whose political views were articulated in dialogue with Marxist ideas, notably Jusuf Wibisono and Kasman Singodimedjo.[107]

[105] Abdulmadjid and Maisir Thaib, *Mentjapai Masjarakat Sosialistis* (Boekittinggi: Dewan Daerah Partai Sosialis Soematera Barat, 1946), 19, 21.
[106] Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, 157.
[107] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 31–32; Fogg, *Indonesia's Islamic Revolution*, 170–84.

In this section, I will refer to "religious socialists" not as a clearly defined political faction but rather as part of a broader discursive field that contained many interlocuters, since the appeal of socialist ideas was evident across the political spectrum.[108] While Masjumi politicians were certainly well represented, there were many others from diverse backgrounds who also put their Islamic identity and Marxist ideas into productive dialogue. To complement better-known Masjumi politicians, this section analyzes revolutionary literature that has received little, if any, scholarly attention. This includes one hitherto unexamined pamphlet by Abdul Manaf (aka Achmad Soebardjo), the republic's first foreign minister; a pamphlet by the Masjumi politician Sjafruddin Prawiranegara; a memoir by Achmadi Moestahal, then a young republican partisan during the revolution; and one of Hamka's lesser-known works, *Revolusi Agama* (1946).

Abdul Manaf, better known as Achmad Soebardjo, served as the republic's first foreign minister (September 1945–November 1945) in Soekarno's presidential cabinet. Abdul Manaf had trained as a lawyer at Leiden University, graduating with a *meester in de rechten* degree in 1933, and was a member of the Perhimpunan Indonesia (Indonesian Association) during his time in the Netherlands. This was the same organization that had been led by Hatta and Sjahrir until their return to the Indies in 1932, and whose leadership was subsequently increasingly influenced by Communism.[109] Abdul Manaf was a staunch Acehnese Muslim; he represented the Egyptian branch of the Perhimpunan Indonesia at the meeting of the League Against Imperialism in February 1927, alongside Hatta (representing Perhimpunan Indonesia in the Netherlands) and Semaun (representing Sarekat Rakyat).[110]

A long-standing pergerakan activist with an Islamic bent, Abdul Manaf also had a track record of being willing to cooperate with Marxists. During the Japanese occupation, it was he who convinced Sjahrir to lecture at the Japanese-sponsored Asrama Indonesia Merdeka by telling that him that Indonesian youth were eager to understand socialism.[111] In 1946, Abdul Manaf published a short pamphlet titled *Faham Islamisme dan Komoenisme*, which explicitly aimed to "correct a misunderstanding common on the part

[108] Kevin Fogg, "Indonesian Socialism of the 1950s: From Ideology to Rhetoric," *Third World Quarterly*, August 2020, https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2020.1794805.

[109] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 92.

[110] Mohammad Hatta, *Mohammad Hatta, Indonesian Patriot: Memoirs*, ed. C. L. M. Penders (Singapore: Gunung Agung, 1981), 112. This is an abridged edition of Hatta's memoirs, which were originally published in Indonesian.

[111] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 249.

of the masses [*rakjat djelata*], especially among those who have a little knowledge of religion . . . that Communism is a specter or ghost to be feared."[112] Abdu'laziz As., who contributed the introduction, argued that this ghost (*hantoe*) did not exist, but like all ghosts, was feared by people who had never seen one; they feared a specter conjured through sheer imagination (*chajal belaka*).[113]

Abdu'laziz argued that Communism had been deeply attractive to the pergerakan before the war, such that "Communism was constantly prodded and peeked at," prompting the Dutch colonial government to pass numerous laws suppressing it.[114] Despite the colonial state's best efforts, Abdu'laziz claimed that the "seeds of Communism flourished in the hearts of the *ra'jat* [masses]," which "simulated the people's interest in the pergerakan more generally."[115] Notably, Abdu'laziz was not describing the spread of Communist propaganda, in the sense of individuals joining the PKI. Rather, he was describing an autodidactic process of self-realization, in which Communism was one of many sources of inspiration for putative Indonesians to articulate their opposition to colonialism. He pointed out that Dutch repression after the 1926–27 uprisings made Communism taboo, such that the people could only "speak of it in whispers"; yet what they feared was not Communism itself, but the specter of exile to Boven Digoel.[116] He argued that this association between Communism and Digoel had unfairly tainted Communism in the eyes of many, making Communism seem taboo, when the real source of their fear was penal exile. Others, having imbibed the Dutch assumption that Communism was subversive, had intuited that Communism was against religion. Like Darsono before him, Abdu'laziz argued that Communism existed on a plane separate from religion; religion and Communism did not occupy commensurate categories. According to him, it was a form of knowledge (he used both *pengetahuan*, knowledge/science and *faham*, concept) containing many ideas that were in accordance with (*bersesoeai dengan*) Islamic teachings.[117]

[112] Abdul Manaf, *Faham Islamisme Dan Komoenisme* (Koetaradja: Partai Komoenis, 1946), 1.

[113] Ibid. Abdu'laziz (also rendered Abdul Aziz) was a PKI member whose loyalties lay with Musso; he had been a member of the "illegal PKI" clandestinely set up by Musso in 1935. He died during the revolution, sometime between 1946 and 1948. See Polit-Biro Central Comite Partai Komunis Indonesia, *Djalan Baru untuk Republik Indonesia*, 12.

[114] Manaf, *Faham Islamisme dan Komoenisme*, 1.

[115] Ibid., 2.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid., 3.

Abdu'laziz went on to explain the points of concordance between Islam and Communism. He stressed his commitment to Islam, writing, "We, as the Islamic ummah, acknowledge the holiness of Islam," and argued that "just as Islam desires world peace, so does Communism desire the unity of all people such that peace may be achieved."[118] He argued that both Islam and Communism were fundamentally opposed to capitalism and imperialism, neither of which was interested in peace, instead "provoking chaos and sowing the seeds of war."[119] Moreover, Islam was an "international religion" and Communism an "international concept [*faham*]": both were "blind to race" and united in opposition to the "greed [*loba*] and self-centeredness [*angkara*] of capitalism."[120] This was one of the most explicit statements of compatibility between Islam and Communism to emerge during the revolution, but it was not entirely surprising given Abdu'laziz's pro–Tan Malaka sympathies throughout the revolution.[121] After all, Tan Malaka had been proclaiming the compatibility of Islam and Communism, without necessarily subordinating Indonesian Communism to the Comintern, since the early 1920s.

Much like Abdu'laziz, Abdul Manaf argued that capitalism and imperialism were intertwined. Capitalism sought only to ingest the wealth of the world, which imperialism had had made available through subjugating colonies and extracting both labor and material cheaply from them.[122] Slipping frequently into an Islamic idiom while demonstrating some genuine facility with Marxist arguments, Abdul Manaf maintained that capitalism transcended races and nations, clearly implying that the Dutch were not particularly cruel colonizers in comparison to other Europeans or the Japanese. Rather, Dutch colonialism was driven by capitalism, which incited the *hawa nafsoe* of self-interest (*angkara)*, without regard for the race of those exploited.[123] Capitalism, according to Abdul Manaf, had the defining characteristic of being willing to "suck anyone's blood."[124] Though he avoided Marxist terms such as "proletariat," preferring instead *rakyat djelata* (the common people), Abdul Manaf's comfort with Marxist frameworks was evident.

[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Achmadi Moestahal, *Dari Gontor Ke Pulau Buru* (Yogyakarta: Syarikat, 2002), 72.
[122] Manaf, *Faham Islamisme dan Komoenisme*, 5.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.

Abdul Manaf signaled his own deep commitment to Islam by quoting from Qur'an 16:128: "God is with those who fear him and those who do good; refrain from helping those who do evil and cause enmity."[125] Capitalism was thus un-Islamic, because it was driven by "carnal desires that know no limits" (*hawa nafsoe jang tidak terbatas*).[126] He rhetorically asked: "What causes man, who is God's viceregent [*chalifah*] on earth, to become a destroyer of the world, much like an animal with no *akal* [rationality]?"[127] Unsurprisingly, his answer was the *nafsu* of the capitalists and imperialists, "who trampled over the rights of people in search of profit for themselves."[128] Again, the Islamic *nafsu/akal* dichotomy informed Indonesians' critique of capitalism and sat comfortably with Marxist ideas. Abdul Manaf did not dwell only on broad Marxist critiques of impersonal economic forces, but also explained capitalism's quotidian effects. He argued that capitalism caused "prices of necessities to continually soar, and people faced increasing hardship. Because the people are struggling even to feed themselves, they learn to be dishonest in all matters relating to their livelihoods—much theft and violence comes from this. There are many men who have sold their good names to feed themselves, and many women who have lost their dignity to fill their stomachs."[129]

This critique was notable for its attention to the prosaic effects of capitalism, recasting what was usually formulated in moral terms even by Islamic modernists—women losing their dignity is, of course, a reference to prostitution—by linking it to impersonal economic forces. In Abdul Manaf's view, people lost their *akal* and were overtaken by *nafsu* or made accessories to others' *nafsu*, because a basic level of prosperity and stability could not be guaranteed under the colonial capitalist economy.[130] Precarity and poverty, keeping labor as poorly paid and as disposable as possible, were built into the structures of capitalism; they were "the fruits of *hawa nafsu*, of selfishness, of the avarice of colonizers and capitalists who longed to swallow the entire world."[131] This, Abdul Manaf contended, was not conducive for the existence of an Islamic society built on equity and fraternity; according to him, it was "reprehensible, and forbidden by Islam."[132]

[125] Ibid., 8.
[126] Ibid., 9.
[127] Ibid., 10.
[128] Ibid., 11.
[129] Ibid., 13.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid., 14.
[132] Ibid.

In the final pages of his pamphlet, Abdul Manaf was more explicit about Islam's relationship with Communism. "Islam and Communism have similar understandings of imperialism and capitalism. Even so, there are still those who consider Islam to be antithetical to Communism. These people need to consider; if Communism is opposed to the features of capitalism and imperialism, how can Islam possibly be against Communism?"[133] He also made clear the importance of human agency in making the world a better place, even as he acknowledged the importance of Muslim piety.

> In the capitalist and imperialist world, justice is not for the weak, but is monopolized by the strong. . . . The oppressed should not ask for justice; not before you have a weapon in your hand, to seize justice for yourself! Justice can be seen in the first rays of sunlight, in the dawn of socialism's victory throughout the world. Does not the Qur'an tell us that Allah does not change a man's situation, if he does not want to change it himself?[134]

Communism was valued not as a modern incarnation of Islam, but simply because it was a system for organizing social relations that prioritized social justice. An equitable society was one that facilitated the harmonious social relations and moral order that were integral to Islamic ethics. This concordance of values made it easy, especially during the conflicts surrounding decolonization, for Indonesian republicans to see Communists as allies or Communism as a useful set of ideological tools, even if they were pious Muslims.

This concordance was also alluded to in revolutionary pamphlets authored by Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, a Masjumi member who served as finance minister from 1946 to 1947, and later as head of the Pemerintah Darurat Republik Indonesia (emergency government of the Republic of Indonesia) after most of the republican leadership was captured by the Dutch in December 1948. Prawiranegara would go on to hold multiple cabinet positions during the parliamentary democracy period, only falling from favor after his participation in the ill-fated PRRI rebellion in 1958. His *Politik dan Revolusi Kita* (Our Politics and Revolution) was published for the second time in 1950, but it was based on a speech he had given just before the foundation of Sjahrir's Partai Sosialis Indonesia (PSI, Socialist Party of Indonesia) in February 1948.[135]

[133] Ibid., 15.
[134] Ibid., 16.
[135] No exact dates are provided for the speech itself, or the pamphlet's publication. The combined Partai Sosialis (PS, Socialist Party) had been jointly led by Sutan Sjahrir and Amir Sjafruddin, but

In it, Prawiranegara bemoaned the fact that most foreigners misunderstood the political inclinations of the Indonesian republicans, suspecting Indonesian republicans of being pro-Moscow Communists.[136] He strenuously rejected this as a misapprehension generated by Dutch propaganda, maintaining that Indonesian socialism was not the same as the socialism and Communism of Marx.[137] What he meant by this was that most Indonesian republicans who called themselves "socialists" and "Communists" were not truly socialists and Communists, because Marxist historical materialism was not philosophically compatible with their belief in God.[138] He did, however, acknowledge that the many of the socialists and Communists he knew were devout Christians or Muslims, "many of whom are more pious than even myself."[139] Much of this pamphlet was devoted to proclaiming the incompatibility of historical materialism and theism, in order to refute the "often-heard claim that Communism or socialism à la Marx does not contradict Islam or Christianity!"[140] Regardless of whether Prawiranegara's ideological taxonomy of Indonesian Marxism was accurate, his pamphlet clearly indicated that many socialist and Communist republicans saw no contradiction between their Marxist political ideas and Islamic faith.

Despite his professed disdain for Marx, Prawiranegara himself was engaged in an attempt to square socialism and its many Marx-derived precepts with religion. He argued that many of the Indonesians who called themselves socialists and Communists "could actually be considered religious socialists, socialists who based their ideas [*faham*] on religion rather than historical materialism."[141] He acknowledged that "socialism can contain many meanings," and cited Dan Griffith's *What Is Socialism?* (1924), which listed over 260 definitions of the term in its overview of social scientific literature.[142] Somewhat condescendingly, he argued that most Indonesian socialists did not fully understand "what their socialism was based on," and

split in June 1947 when Amir forcefully ousted Sjahrir and formed the FDR. Sjahrir subsequently set up his own, much-diminished, Partai Sosialis Indonesia (PSI, Socialist Party of Indonesia) in February 1948.

[136] Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, *Politik Dan Revolusi Kita* (Medan: Andalas, 1950), 4.
[137] Ibid., 5.
[138] Ibid., 10–12.
[139] Ibid., 11.
[140] Ibid., 13.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid. Griffith was a schoolteacher in Llanelli, Wales, and a British Labour Party activist. See Dan Griffith, *What Is Socialism? A Symposium* (London: G. Richards, 1924).

strongly suggested that they ought to make common cause with the religious parties like Masjumi instead of aligning themselves with the "Marxist-Socialists."[143] This was obviously a self-interested argument for a Masjumi politician, but one that reveals the efforts many Muslims made to find an ideological space in which their socialist-inspired political ideas could coexist with their Islamic identity. Prawiranegara even grudgingly admitted that "no thinker since the Prophet Muhammad had shaken humanity's thinking [*menggontjangkan pikiran manusia*] as Marx had," and that "however great the merits [*djasa-djasa*] of Marxism, it cannot be denied that there are fundamental differences between Marxism and religious ideology."[144]

One of Prawiranegara's sticking points, interestingly, was that Islam and Christianity both valued compassion and forbade hating even one's enemies. Socialism as practiced by Lenin and Stalin, however, was "without humanity or mercy to both friends and enemies who obstructed the revolution."[145] In Prawiranegara's estimation, the republic's constitution did enshrine socialism, but not a socialism based on historical materialism, because the constitution also recognized the existence of God (*Ketuhanan jang Maha Esa*).[146] To him, socialism could and should be delinked from its application in the USSR or elsewhere, and adapted to suit Indonesia's circumstances. If that meant reconciling socialism with monotheism, Prawiranegara was comfortable with that. Prawiranegara was effectively delineating his own approach to socialism, one that was open to Muslims like himself, within a broad church of "socialisms" that could draw from Eduard Bernstein and Rosa Luxemburg or Charles Fourier and Henri de Saint-Simon as much as it did from Marx and Engels (all of whom he cited). He was opposed to dogmatic Marxists who saw in Marx's writings, and their Soviet interpreters, a complete guide to human history. Recognizing the important intellectual contributions that Marx had made in critiquing capitalism, Prawiranegara was not opposed to adapting Marxist ideas, even though he certainly would reject the label "Marxist" in describing himself. Like so many other republicans examined here, he was a "translator" of what the world had to offer Indonesia.

In the electrifying atmosphere of revolution, the eclectic combinations of Islamic identities, ethics, and injunctions with Marxist ideas, combinations came to full flower that had already been apparent since the late 1910s. Just as

[143] Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, *Politik Dan Revolusi Kita*, 14.
[144] Ibid., 20.
[145] Ibid., 21.
[146] Ibid., 37.

the supporters of Sarekat Islam had imagined themselves as part of a global ummah from the 1910s onward, especially during the height of the *khilafat* movement, Indonesian republicans could now imagine themselves as part of a great, global anticolonial wave that was only just cresting, and which would sweep away the detritus of colonial empires. For Indonesian Muslims, their membership in the ummah and their participation in this anticolonial, prodemocratic wave sweeping the world was not mutually exclusive. The egalitarian expectations unleashed by revolution, fueled as they were by decades of racial discrimination and years of wartime privation, opened the door for Indonesian Muslims to reimagine the contours of their putative nationhood in exciting new ways. Would Indonesia be an overt extension of the ummah, embracing Islam as its state religion and codifying normative Sharia as positive law? Would it find some other way of containing and nurturing its Islamicity? Would it, as the other decolonizing states had attempted, structurally reform its society and economy to facilitate more equitable and dignified lives for its citizens? If so, how? Muslim republicans posed all these questions and arrived at a plethora of different answers. In this ferment, even modernist Islamic scholars with well-documented antipathies to Communism, like Hamka, sometimes found themselves exploring brave new possibilities amid the excitement of revolution and all the intense desires—for equity, for relief, for dignity—that the revolution seemed to embody.

Hamka's *Revolusi Agama* was originally published in 1946, and a second edition was printed in 1949, during the final negotiations with the Dutch. It struck an unmistakably patriotic, triumphal, and optimistic tone: the second edition was dedicated to the many heroes of the revolution, both famous and unknown. The core of Hamka's argument was that social revolution and religious revolution should go hand in hand because religion and society were inextricably linked. The forces unleashed by the Indonesian Revolution could only be consolidated and harnessed by proper religious praxis, shaping the new institutions, cultures, and principles that would replace the old colonial norms. Equally, Hamka recognized that religious praxis was often a reflection of the social conditions in which adherents existed.

Hamka acknowledged how common it was for the rich to oppress the poor, or a powerful country to oppress a weaker one, while using religion and tradition to justify their actions.[147] He pointed out that those who sought to change the status quo or to reinterpret religion were often condemned as

[147] Hamka, *Revolusi Agama* (Djakarta: Pustaka Antara, 1946), 5–6.

provocateurs with no respect for tradition: not only by the beneficiaries of the status quo, but also by those who suffered under it, because all had been socialized to accept its normality and sacrality. This was a distinctly open-minded line of argument, which had much more to do with Émile Durkheim and Max Weber than the classical Islamic discipline of exegesis (*tafsir*) in which Hamka had been trained. Hamka's premise for *Revolusi Agama* was the existence of a fundamental link between religion and society: one could not be corrected or improved without corresponding changes in the other. The Indonesian Revolution, for him, was a good example of how political changes had to be accompanied by religious ones for the full promise of the revolution to be realized.

This framework led Hamka to some surprising positions, jarring when situated alongside his later emphasis on combating secularism and nihilism during the 1950s.[148] The revolution opened certain novel possibilities as Indonesians sought to define the shape of their republic, and this atmosphere influenced Hamka as well. In *Revolusi Agama*, Hamka conceptualized social revolution as the struggle for a more just and equitable society.[149] Writing glowingly of Ataturk, Hamka argued that the Turkish national revolution had been cemented by repelling the Greek invasion of Ionia and secured by the Treaty of Lausanne (1923). This political revolution was accompanied by a social revolution of "eradicating obsolete thinking" (*menghapuskan paham kolot*), which involved the abolition of the caliphate, adopting the Latin script to increase literacy, circumscribing the formal influence of ulama over politics, and freeing women from having the wear the veil.[150] These were all remarkably progressive positions that were enormously controversial across the ummah, and it was surprising that Hamka endorsed them so unreservedly.

Even more surprising was Hamka's direct engagement with Marx's ideas in *Revolusi Agama*. Hamka's original foreword to the 1946 edition quoted Marx, not to condemn him but to approbate Marx's belief that "the guarantee of a people's freedom is the spirit of freedom."[151] Hamka even went on to admit that many nations had historically used religion as a tool of oppression,

[148] Rush, *Hamka's Great Story*, 122.
[149] Hamka, *Revolusi Agama*, 6.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid., 7. It is not clear which text Hamka was quoting from, and he did not provide a reference. It is possible that he was paraphrasing Marx's *Wages of Labour* (1844), in which Marx explicitly recognized the necessity for the individual's development of a spiritual (though not religious) life, which could only happen if material conditions were not precarious.

drawing on the example of pre-Reformation Europe, seventeenth-century France, and twentieth-century Russia, portraying Luther, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Marx as liberating heroes in those contexts.[152] Hamka bemoaned the fact that "Allah's name" had been similarly abused to justify tyranny (*kezaliman*), and called for religious revolutions across the Islamic world to match the political revolutions unleashed by the Second World War.[153]

Hamka went on to incorporate Marxism, as part of a broader embrace of enlightenment philosophy, into his Islamic frame of reference. He argued that all atheistic or non-Muslim philosophers and intellectuals who came after Muhammad, "from Luther and Erasmus, Spinoza and Schopenhauer, Voltaire and Rousseau, Tolstoy and Gandhi, even Hegel and Marx, were sent to perfect the interpretation of the great teachings of the Qur'an [*menjempurnakan tafsir dari pada adjaran besar itu*]."[154] Like many other pergerakan activists, Hamka was "translating" Europe to Indonesia, incorporating all the intellectual insights that Europe had to offer into an Islamic intellectual and moral framework. His basic premise was that God works in mysterious ways, allowing even nonbelievers to contribute toward the betterment of humanity in general, and the ummah in particular. The Sunna could thus be even better understood in the light of their contributions. Hamka explicitly stated that the work of these intellectuals, their *ilmu manusia* (human/secular knowledge, as opposed to divinely inspired knowledge), contributed to the "overcoming of *hawa nafsu*, such that it no longer afflicted the spirit of humanity."[155] This certainly did not make Hamka an Islamic Communist, but it was indicative of the Weltanschauung of a large group of Muslims in his generation, especially within Masjumi, which Hamka had strong connections to.[156] They "translated" Europe to fit within their Islamic framework, willingly allowing their secular European education to influence how they translated their Islamic piety into social praxis and government policy. This could involve, as Hamka explicitly stated, productively using the insights of Marx and others to shape policies derived from an Islamic moral calculus.[157]

[152] Ibid., 8.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid., 24.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Rush, *Hamka's Great Story*, 118.
[157] Hamka, *Revolusi Agama*, 24.

Hamka seemed comfortable with the formulation *Ketuhanan jang Maha Esa*[158] although he clearly saw it as the cardinal value of the Pancasila. He argued that *Ketuhanan jang Maha Esa* was an inclusive concept, one that "not only pulls at the souls of the ummah, but causes vibrations in the spirits of Christians and Hindus as well."[159] He even ended his foreword to the 1949 edition with a celebration of the life and sacrifice of the Christian *laskar* leader Robert Wolter Monginsidi, convicted and executed by the Dutch for war crimes against civilians in 1949. Hamka described him as "the descendant of Tuanku Imam Bondjol" and placed him in the same pantheon as the Javanese Muslim prince Diponeogoro.[160] This spoke volumes about the interreligious solidarity that was embedded in his vision of Islam, at least during the revolution. Secondarily, his point seemed to be that *Ketuhanan jang Maha Esa* was not a meaningless compromise, but a genuinely important guiding principle that should command the loyalty and respect of Indonesian Muslims. Moved by the prevailing revolutionary spirit of inclusion, Hamka was even willing to explicitly include Marxists in the imagined community that was the putative republic. His afterword is particularly revealing:

> We too, as Marxists [*Kitapun, sebagai kaum Marxis*] hate capitalism and imperialism, because we ourselves have suffered for centuries, and because our original religious teachings are anticapitalism and anti-imperialism, which are full of malice. However, inasmuch as we hate capitalism and imperialism, we do not fall into the pit of atheism and modern colonialism in this world, which flows from the Kremlin. In barely thirty years, the Communist movement has been pushed into this direction by Moscow. Countries that adhere to the Communist creed are considered enemies by Moscow if they do not implement the instructions of Stalin and his Russia. Communism has lost its spirit of freedom, and is no different from Catholicism; the Communist obeys Stalin, while the Catholic obeys the pope![161]

[158] "Belief in the One and Only God," the unhappy compromise in Pancasila that had prevented the Jakarta charter from being included in the republic's constitution. The Jakarta Charter would have made Islam Indonesia's state religion.

[159] Hamka, *Revolusi Agama*, 14.

[160] Ibid., 15. These were the two best-known leaders of Muslim resistance to nineteenth-century Dutch colonial encroachment, and whose struggles had long been celebrated, even ahistorically fetishized, by the pergerakan since the early twentieth century.

[161] Ibid., 75.

Clearly, Hamka did not mean to suggest that he was a Marxist in the sense of being part of a global Communist movement, although he certainly did sympathize with a global proletarian solidarity, and emphasized the common humanity between Muslims and non-Muslims. He understood Indonesians to be Marxists to the extent that they could and should benefit from Marx's insights into the pernicious effects of capitalism; how it had driven the very imperialism that had caused Indonesians to suffer first as colonial subjects, and later as combatants or civilians during the revolution. This willingness to adapt Marx's framework is hinted at throughout *Revolusi Agama*. In explaining the development of human societies across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Hamka's analysis conformed to the broad outlines of Marxist historical teleology, accepting its explanation of how and why power passes from monarchies and priesthoods to the bourgeois class, subsequently becoming intertwined with modern imperialism and colonialism, while simultaneously sowing the seeds of its own destruction by creating an environment conducive for socialist and Communist movements to establish themselves.[162] This did not mean that he accepted dialectical materialism, but it did indicate that Hamka sometimes found Marxist analysis useful and even compelling. Khairudin Aljuneid portrays Hamka attempting to striking a balance between capitalism and Communism, but at least during the revolution it would be more accurate to say that Hamka recognized the twisted reality of the USSR, yet did not accept that this invalidated Marxism, with all the important insights it had provided to Indonesians.[163] This nuanced position, while common enough among democratic socialists or social democrats, was soon to become unutterable across the fault lines of the Cold War in the global South, in which Muslims like Hamka were compelled to choose sides. The revolution presented a special moment in which these unitarian sentiments and synthetic political visions could be articulated with a degree of honesty, though that moment would not last long.

Mixing Islamic identity and Marxist inspirations was not limited to the upper echelon of republican politicians. In his memoir, *Dari Gontor ke Pulau Buru* (2002), Achmadi Moestahal (b. 1928) described himself as a *santri* who embraced Marxism.[164] His introduction made clear that this confluence was the main point of interest for his readers and publisher, but he also

[162] Ibid., 30.
[163] Aljunied, *Hamka and Islam*, 54–57.
[164] Moestahal, *Dari Gontor Ke Pulau Buru*, x.

admitted that he could not possibly satisfy their curiosity on the matter; he could only speak from his own experiences instead of offering a comprehensive analysis of Islamic socialism. Instead, he hoped his memoir would clarify his own *aqidah* (lit. creed, a word that has deep associations with formal Islamic theology) as a Muslim who embraced "scientific socialism" alongside (*berdampingan*) Islamic teachings that were charged with "religious socialism."[165] He accepted Soekarno's use of Marxism as an "effective tool of analysis," arguing that Marx's teachings were not incompatible with Islam, because Islam emphasized "pluralism, equality and justice" (*ajaran pluralisme, musawah [persamaan], dan 'adalah [keadilan]*), always taking the side of the poor and oppressed.[166] This view of Islam, in Moestahal's own words, was "substantive and inclusive" instead of "formal and symbolic," an "attempt to capture the fire of Islam, not its ash and embers."[167]

The memoir's title, *From Gontor to Buru Island*, is itself an indicator of how Moestahal understood the unnecessary antipathy between the categories "Muslim" and "Marxist," an antipathy that dominated Indonesian public consciousness when his memoir was published in 2002. Founded in 1926, Gontor was a truly remarkable *pesantren* that straddled the ideologies of the reformist Muhammdiyah and the traditionalist NU. Gontor combined the study of classical texts with the latest pedagogical innovations such as organized grades, curricula, and standardized assessments. It was also notable for compelling students to communicate in English or Arabic to improve their mastery of these languages. Martin van Bruinessen points out that while Gontor drew inspiration from famed Islamic reformist institutions like the Egyptian Dar al-'Ulum of Rashid Rida and Muhammad Abduh as well as the Aligarh Anglo-Muslim College of Syed Ahmad Khan, it also continued to teach from classical *fiqh* texts like Ibn Rushd's *Bidayat al-Mujtahid*.[168] This classical *fiqh* treatise was itself remarkable because it comparatively analyzed the rulings of the four major Sunni schools of jurisprudence, instead of sticking to the Shafi'i *madhhab* that was and is dominant in the Malay Archipelago. Gontor would go on to produce progressive Muslim thinkers like Nurcholish Madjid and Yudi Latief during the 1970s and 1980s. It was an unusual institution that was at once progressive and traditional, and it

[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid., xi.
[168] Martin van Bruinessen, "Traditionalist and Islamist Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia," in *The Madrasa in Asia: Political Activism and Transnational Linkages* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 223.

is perhaps unsurprising that a Muslim Communist like Moestahal emerged from such an intellectually dynamic environment.

In juxtaposing a famous *pesantren* against a penal colony for Communist political prisoners (the taint of which could ruin one's career under Suharto's regime) in his memoir's title, Moestahal did not seek to trace his conversion from Muslim to Marxist. Rather, he sought to show how those two categories could coexist; how the distance between them could be traversed, how those two symbols could be linked. Moestahal himself had literally gone from Gontor to Buru and renounced neither. While not everyone might have had the benefit of a conspicuously prestigious Islamic education, there were many others like Moestahal who also managed to traverse that distance between seemingly disparate categories in their own ways.

Moestahal had a pious Islamic upbringing in Madiun during the 1930s, with many opportunities to learn about Marxism. As a Muhammadiyah member, Moestahal's father was tasked with conducting *dakwah* among Indonesians who had at least a primary school education. Moestahal recalled the enthusiasm many of these people had for rationalized, modernist Islam, which emphasized *ijtihad*.[169] Moestahal's education was distinctly Islamic—he attended the Muhammadiyah Hollandsche-Inlandsche School (HIS, a Dutch-medium school for natives) in Madiun during the day, and the Madarassah Ibtidaiyah Islamiyah in the evenings.[170] Despite his family's ties to Muhammadiyah and his own attraction to *ijtihad*, Moestahal was educated in the traditional *pesantren* manner, studying two *kitab kuning* treatises on *fiqh* in depth: *Matan Taqrib* and *Nahwu Jurumiyah*.[171] By his fourth year, Moestahal had even begun conducting *dakwah* in low Javanese, explaining the meaning of Qur'anic verses and hadith to his juniors. As a madrasah student, Moestahal recalled reading "radical-revolutionary" Permi literature (presumably texts like *Tabligh Oemoem*, analyzed in chapter 2) at a friend's house, as well as brochures and books by former Digoel detainees.[172] He recalled beginning to realize that many of the internees were not PKI members, but often merely sympathetic to Marxism.[173] Tjokroaminoto's

[169] Moestahal, *Dari Gontor Ke Pulau Buru*, 13.
[170] Ibid., 18.
[171] *Kitab Kuning* (lit. yellow books) were the classical *fiqh* texts used in *pesantren* education and constituted a "finite and bounded body" of knowledge. See Martin van Bruinessen, "Pesantren and Kitab Kuning: Maintenance and Continuation of a Tradition of Religious Learning," in *Texts from the Islands: Oral and Written Traditions of Indonesia and the Malay World*, ed. Wolfgang Marschall (Berne: University of Berne, 1994), 121–45.
[172] Moestahal, *Dari Gontor Ke Pulau Buru*, 26.
[173] Ibid., 27.

Islam and Socialism (1924) in particular left a strong impression on Moestahal, helping him to understand that Sarekat Islam was based on "religious nationalism" and "religious socialism," and that it was therefore fundamentally anticapitalist in character because it opposed an extractive capitalist economy bisected by race.[174]

After completing his Dutch-medium education and weathering the Japanese occupation with his family, Moestahal enrolled as a student in Gontor in late 1945 to study under Ustadz Idham Chalid, formerly of the famous Kulliyatul Mualimin al-Islamiyyah madrasah.[175] This master-disciple relationship, and the lineage it implied, would later prove useful on more than one occasion. Of particular interest is Moestahal's recollection that Sjahrir's classic revolutionary socialist tract *Perjuangan Kita* (1945) was widely read and well received by Gontor students.[176] Moestahal recalled learning the basic principles of Marxism from one Muhammad Syarif, formerly a medical orderly in Boven Digoel, who was introduced to the family by K. H. Abdul Muthi.[177] Moestahal would often visit him after graduating from HIS. Syarif, who spent the 1930s as a Muhammadiyah propagandist in Madiun, would go on to join Sjahrir's Socialist Party during the revolution. Abdul Muthi, who had introduced Syarif to Moestahal, became a staunch supporter of Tan Malaka's PP, and was a member of clandestine underground networks run by Sukarni, a Tan Malaka loyalist who served as secretary-general of the PP and later as the head of the Partai Murba.[178] Moestahal, clearly, was not alone in being a pious Muslim attracted to Marxist ideas.

Moestahal was a young man of seventeen when the revolution broke out. Like many of his peers, sometimes called the "Angkatan 45" (Generation of 1945), he became politically aware at a time when the possibilities for political allegiances were legion, no matter how hybrid or eclectic. However, the ability to compound Islamic identity and Marxist ideas was not unique to the revolutionary period; as the preceding chapters have shown, and as Moestahal's own recollection of Muhammad Syarif suggests, there was a decades-long tradition of putting Islam and Marxism in productive dialogue with each other. The Angkatan 45 were indeed a dynamic and bold generation, producing a flowering of political thought also seen in other rapidly

[174] Ibid., 29.
[175] Ibid., 47.
[176] Ibid., 56.
[177] Ibid., 30.
[178] Ibid., 73.

decolonizing societies such as Malaya and Vietnam.[179] Nevertheless, strong continuities between the prewar and revolutionary periods existed, not least in the form of Islamic socialism and its many permutations.

After leaving Gontor sometime in 1946, Moestahal joined the Masjumi *laskar* Hizbullah in Yogyakarta, primarily because it was commanded by another Gontor alumnus, Muhammad Duchan bin Haji Bilal. However, his expanding political horizons prompted him to leave; he decided that he would prefer not to serve in a religiously exclusive force.[180] He joined the republican army, then known as the Tentara Keamanan Rakyat (TKR, the People's Security Army), and served in the Sukowati battalion. He became close to a fellow soldier, one Touchid of the TKR's Ponogoro battalion, who was slightly older than Moestahal and came from a *santri* background as well. Touchid had been raised around Sumotro and Bandengan (just west of Ponogoro), areas that had been Sarekat Rakjat strongholds during the 1926–27 uprisings. Their connection was built on shared religiosity: Touchid had previously been a member of the Sarekat Islam Afdeeling Pandu, an Islamic scouting organization, much as Moestahal had been a member of Muhammadiyah's scouting organization, the Hizbul Wathan.[181]

Their common background and consequent friendship led to an ongoing dialogue about the importance of leftist politics. Eventually, Touchid invited Moestahal to attend talks held by Marxist political parties, as well as to Sarekat Rakyat events in Badegan and Sumoroto. It was at such events that Moestahal met and learned from the pergerakan activists of the 1926–27 generation: in Sumoroto, Moestahal met Mbah Diko, a female Sarekat Rakyat leader who had been imprisoned for the 1926–27 uprisings. Moestahal cited her as an important influence on his political development, crediting her with exposing him to ideas of nonviolent civil resistance as practiced by the Saminists in the early twentieth century.[182] In his memoir, Moestahal wrote that he was never really sure why Touchid chose to befriend him, but speculated that it might be because of their shared piety. Touchid knew that Moestahal had been a student at Gontor and had observed that Moestahal was rigorous in performing the five daily prayers.[183] It seems likely that their

[179] T. N. Harper, "The Malayan Spring," in *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 55–93; Kim Ngoc Bao Ninh, *A World Transformed: The Politics of Culture in Revolutionary Vietnam* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

[180] Moestahal, *Dari Gontor Ke Pulau Buru*, 72.

[181] Ibid., 22, 58.

[182] Ibid., 59.

[183] Ibid., 58.

shared religiosity deepened their personal relationship while facilitating their attraction to leftist politics.

Throughout his time in the army, Moestahal continued to encounter individuals whose backgrounds mixed Islamic faith and Marxist inspiration. For example, Moestahal had a good relationship with one Colonel Rohim Gondosuwito, an Amir Sjarifuddin loyalist who headed the Biro Perjuangan (Struggle Bureau) in Yogyakarta; Rohim had spent the prewar years as a PSII activist.[184] When Moestahal was training to become a commissioned officer in late 1948 and early 1949, he attended courses on Marxism at a sugar factory in South Yogyakarta, Padokan Madukismo, which the students dubbed "Marx House."[185] There, several of his course-mates were also of Islamic backgrounds: Anfal Idris and Aslam had both studied in the Islam Wal Fajri Kerangkajen *pesantren* in Yogyakarta before coming to Marx House.[186] Moestahal himself attended Marx House under the sponsorship of the Socialist Party, and he described the political orientation of his fellow participants as not Marxist per se, but rather people interested to learn about and from Marxism. Moestahal described them as *yang orientasi dan afiliasi politiknya adalah progresif revolusioner*, those whose orientation and political affiliation were progressive and revolutionary.[187] Moestahal evenhandedly admitted that some Muslim participants eventually chose to leave the pro-Amir Sjarifuddin Sajap Kiri after studying at Marx House, because they concluded that historical materialism was necessarily atheistic. Moestahal himself, and many others like him, did not come to that conclusion.

Moestahal also made a point of emphasizing how permeable the divisions between *aliran* (lit. streams) were during the revolution, and explained how many people, including himself, straddled those boundaries. He pointed out that Islamic leaders such as NU's K. H. Wahid Hasyim, who served as the first minister of religious affairs in late 1945 (and again from 1949 to 1952), was a committed supporter of Tan Malaka's PP during the revolution. The fluidity of *aliran* boundaries was also illustrated by Moestahal's own developmental trajectory as a republican partisan: from under K. H. Abdul Mu'thi's mentorship,

[184] Ibid., 65. The Biro Perjuangan was set up by Amir Sjarifuddin, who served as defense minister (November 1945–January 1948) for the bulk of the revolution, ostensibly to coordinate the various *laskar* (militias) and *badan perjuangan* (struggle bodies), but also to consolidate Amir's socialist party's influence over the various armed bodies outside the army's formal command structure. The Biro Perjuangan would eventually evolve into the command structure of the TNI Masyarakat (People's Army) and be brought under firmer military control.

[185] Ibid., 82–83.

[186] Ibid., 83.

[187] Ibid.

and despite having had strong associations with Masjumi's Hizbullah, Moestahal was "passed" (*menyerahkan bimbingan*) by Abdul Mu'thi into the guidance of Major General Djokosujono, an Amir Sjarifuddin loyalist in the Ministry of Defense. Djokosujono also happened to be the brother-in-law to the future Murba Party chairman Sukarni. Moestahal had many frank conversations with Djokosujono about the necessity of mobilizing Muslim support for Amir Sjarifuddin's Sajap Kiri, recognizing that Islamic *laskar* and *badan perjuangan* were being overwhelmingly drawn to Tan Malaka's PP.[188] Both the socialists in power, and the Communists in opposition, were actively seeking Muslim support during the revolution, sometimes becoming actual beneficiaries of it. The result of these conversations was Djokosujono employing Moestahal as a go-between for the Sajap Kiri and various Islamic organizations. In this capacity, Moestahal even met with the aforementioned K. H. Wahid Hasyim twice in Ngabean, Yogyakarta, as a personal emissary of Amir Sjarifuddin, to negotiate NU support for Amir's government.[189] Moestahal also had some success in securing support from Masjumi. He managed to get K. H. Zainul Arifien, leader of Masjumi's Hizbullah *laskar*, and K. H. Maskyur, a prominent leader of Masjumi's Sabilillah *laskar*, to join the government-sponsored Dewan Pertahanan Negara (National Defense Council).[190] Naturally, Moestahal's strong Islamic credentials helped in this endeavor, and he saw no problem leveraging those connections to get Muslims to work with the governing socialists.

This slippage between *aliran*, and the limitations of convenient classifications such as "nationalists" or "Communists," was also evident in Moestahal's success as a negotiator. After the Madiun affair of 1948, Moestahal was identified as an Amir Sjarifuddin sympathizer and interned for some weeks. After being released, Moestahal negotiated the release of his friend and comrade, Slamet Sabijan (who had participated in the fighting at Madiun), from internment by a Hizbullah unit. Moestahal negotiated directly with the unit's commander, Za'ran Hajid, appealing specifically to a sense of Islamic brotherhood by stressing his Islamic credentials as a Gontor

[188] Ibid., 76.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Ibid., 77. Established under state of emergency regulations on July 6, 1946, the State Defense Council included the prime minister, a number of senior cabinet ministers, the army's top leadership, as well as *laskar* commanders. It constituted the highest military decision-making authority in the republic during the revolution and sought to coordinate and control diverse military outfits across all theatres. See Robert Cribb and Audrey Kahin, eds., *Historical Dictionary of Indonesia* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 116.

graduate, and their mutual friends within Hizbullah. Despite having been a political prisoner himself, and the prevailing paranoia regarding Communist insurrection, Moestahal successfully negotiated Slamet Sabijan's release.[191] In the eyes of Za'ran Hajid, Moestahal was able to slip between the categories of "Muslim" and "Marxist." Moestahal's identity was hybrid and dynamic: he could be a Marxist in one context and a staunch Muslim in another. More importantly, in eyes of many, even those overtly opposed to Marxism (as conservative Masjumi supporters often were), it was not impossible to be both a salutary Muslim and a synthesizer of Marxist ideas at the same time. Luckily for Moestahal, being a good Muslim trumped all suspicions about Marxism in this context.

Moestahal's memoirs show how "Marxism" was decidedly not a party affiliation, but a broader discursive field that was influential in informing the political ideas of revolutionaries. It is only by recognizing the mutability of Marxism—that is, different individuals drew on it to various degrees, and in various ways—as well as the autodidactic nature of its circulation that we can understand how many Muslims were able to accommodate Marxist ideas. Writing of his experiences in officer cadet school, then known as the Asrama Republik Indonesia (ASRI), Moestahal recalled that it was common for ASRI trainees to read the Pesindo (Indonesian Socialist Youth) newspaper *Revolusioner* and the PKI newspaper *Bintang Merah*, with the full understanding that these publications were "promoting and explaining socialism and Marxism-Leninism."[192] Moestahal explicitly stated that readers were not necessarily members of the PKI, but rather sympathizers who respected the PKI as one of the few parties with a long history of brave and overt opposition to the Dutch.[193] They sought to learn what ideology gave rise to this bravery, but were by no means passive consumers of propaganda.

Tan Malaka's writings circulated freely in ASRI and were read by many officer cadets: Moestahal recalled that *Dari Pendjara ke Pendjara*, *Madilog*, *Massa Aksi*, *Gerpolek*, *Tesis*, and even Alimin's rebuttal to *Tesis* (titled *Analisis*) were popular.[194] In Moestahal's estimation, Tan Malaka and his associates, although small in number, exercised a much greater discursive influence over republican revolutionary thought than Sajap Kiri or the FDR ever did. Moestahal himself "devoured" (*melahap*) all of these texts, analyzing them

[191] Moestahal, *Dari Gontor Ke Pulau Buru*, 98.
[192] Ibid., 81.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid.

and adding his own insights to what he learned from "progressive ideologies like scientific socialism and Communism."[195] Despite the circulation of these texts, it would not be fair to assume that ASRI was a center for disseminating Communist propaganda, since few officers actually became PKI members. Rather, the circulation of Marxist ideas in ASRI, as attested to by Moestahal, was evidence of how republican autodidacts sought to productively synthesize their Indonesian identities and what the wider world had to offer. As one of the most virulently anticolonial ideologies available, Marxism was attractive to republican partisans because of both the PKI's long history of opposition to colonialism, and the interest in Marxist precepts that characterized anticolonial movements across the global South in the post-1945 era.[196] Marxism as a discursive field functioned as one among many theoretical corpora that Indonesian republicans drew from to inform their anticolonial, nation-building project.

Moestahal's memoir contains a revealing anecdote about then-president Soekarno. Moestahal wrote about a conversation he witnessed between the former Taman Siswa teacher and noted painter S. Sudjojono and Soekarno, soon after Soekarno's return to republican-controlled Yogyakarta from Dutch-imposed exile in Bangka.[197] Sudjojono asked: "Brother Karno, are you still a Marxist?" to which Soekarno replied, "Naturally, Djon [Sudjojono's nickname], I am still a Marxist!" Sudjojono's response was cutting: "And why do you remain silent when your friends who were Marxists were shot?" This was a reference to the Madiun affair, which the supporters of Amir Sjarifuddin and Musso had always insisted was not a rebellion against the republic, but rather than an attempt to steer the republic away from fruitless negotiations with the faithless Dutch. Apparently, Sudjojono's accusation hit home, and Soekarno kept silent while weeping for a long while.[198] While recollections made decades after the fact are always suspect, this recollection is relatively credible for two reasons. First, the generally pro-Soekarno Moestahal was not trying to paint Soekarno in a heroic light. Here Soekarno was portrayed

[195] Ibid., 82. In Moestahal's own words, "Saya mencoba melahap semua bacaan itu, dan dengan sendirinya memberikan tambahan pengetahuan dan wawasan yang membuat saya lebih tertarik terhadap ideologi progresif—revolusioner termasuk ideologi marxisme, socialisme ilmiah, dan kommunisme."

[196] Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A Biography of the Short-Lived Third World* (Delhi: Leftward Books, 2007), 64–65.

[197] Sudjojono had been influenced by Marxist ideas even before the revolution, and would go on to become a leading figure in the PKI-endorsed artists' association, Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat (LEKRA).

[198] Moestahal, *Dari Gontor Ke Pulau Buru*, 95.

as living with the bitterness and regret resulting from his decision to use force against his erstwhile comrades in the FDR. It had been Soekarno who made the radio broadcast on September 19, 1948, declaring Madiun a coup attempt and calling on the people to choose between Soekarno-Hatta and Amir-Musso as their leaders. Second, Moestahal published his memoir in 2002, after decades of New Order anti-Communist messaging that Madiun was a Communist insurrection, which "proved" the PKI's antirepublican character and justified its bloody suppression in 1965. There was little for Moestahal to gain from painting Soekarno as sympathetic to the deeply demonized Front Demokrasi Rakyat, or from humanizing the participants of the Madiun affair—the whole incident remained deeply transgressive in the public eye.

While Moestahal did not explain the anecdote's significance, I argue that it reveals his desire to communicate something about the unique atmosphere of the revolution. Through this tale of Soekarno's bitterness and regret, Moestahal conveyed the fundamental desire for cooperation—indeed, the belief that fruitful cooperation was possible—between Marxists and other supporters of the republic, including Muslims like himself. Soekarno was strongly influenced by Marxist ideas but never joined the PKI. His ostensible regret in the face of Sudjojono's accusation was an expression of the optimistic republican sentiments of unity and fraternity that defined the revolution, but which had not prevailed at Madiun. To Soekarno, hard choices had to be made to preserve the republic, but he understood that Musso, Sumarsono, Djokusujono, Amir, and all the other Madiun participants were fundamentally his comrades. Their disagreements lay in the realm of policy, not goals. That genuine comradeship set the tenor of the revolution: only a few republicans like Musso were obedient to the USSR, subordinating local interests to global imperatives emanating from Moscow. It was within such an atmosphere that Islam and Marxism could coexist, sometimes even symbiotically, as in Moestahal's case.

I have found comparative perspectives from other times and places instructive in characterizing these "religious socialists." Saba Mahmood's study of the women's mosque movement, part of a broader phenomenon she called the Islamic revival of the 1970s, articulated an important insight about the relationship between religion and politics: religion and politics do not necessarily exist in separate realms, in line with the private/public dichotomy outlined by Jürgen Habermas.[199] More recently, a younger generation of scholars such as Nir Shafir have taken those insights and applied

[199] Saba Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 4–5. See also Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*

them fruitfully in disparate contexts like the early modern Ottoman Empire, reexamining the role of religion in a sometimes irreligious Islamicate polity.[200] Mahmood argued that Eurocentric notions of secularism willfully excised religion from politics, whereas the women she studied often understood their piety as fundamentally political. Piety was not merely a corrective or safety valve for the stifling of overt political expression, and it did not necessarily lead to joining the Muslim Brotherhood or demanding regime change in the streets. Just as Muslim women in the 1970s were able to develop and express new political subjectivities through their cultivation of Islamic piety, many Indonesian Muslims understood their faith as political, but not in terms of "political Islam," a term that assumes the inappropriate intrusion of the "private" into the "public."

The most literal incarnation of "political Islam" during the revolution was Kartosuwirjo's Darul Islam movement and his proposed Negara Islam Indonesia (Islamic State of Indonesia), which he proclaimed on August 7, 1949. This was attractive only to a small minority of Indonesian Muslims, however. Most Indonesian Muslims supported republican political parties like Masjumi, the PSII, and later Nahdlatul Ulama (NU, which split from Masjumi and organized a political party in 1952). They understood Islamic piety to be absolutely central to their political choices, but their agendas did not entail the installation of an Islamic state to replace the republic.[201] For Muslim politicians such as Prawiranegara, it was their humane and rational faith that compelled them to adapt the intellectual innovations of the West, including those contributed by Marxists. Outside of the republican elite, pious Indonesian Muslims—like Achmadi Moestahal and Djoeir Moehamad—also supported political parties strongly influenced by Marxist ideas. The head of state himself was a self-proclaimed Marxist as well as a Muslim. For such people, their Islamic piety made possible leftist political subjectivities instead of foreclosing possibilities. Piety could be and was expressed in a plurality of ways, whether in parliamentary debates, backroom

of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991).

[200] Nir Shafir, "Moral Revolutions: The Politics of Piety in the Ottoman Empire Reimagined," *Comparative Studies in History and Society* 61, no. 3 (2019): 595–623. Shafir's analysis of *nasihat* could well apply to many Masjumi politicians, who were concerned with how to exhort their fellow Muslims to lead moral lives; they understood the intricacies of structuring of this morality socially as constituting the realm of politics.

[201] All of these parties, however, did consistently argue for Islam to be enshrined as the state religion (albeit with plenty of protections for religious minorities) in the republic's constitution.

negotiations, public speeches, or the numerous venues for political activity made possible by the revolution.

Muslims in the Labor Movement

Tan Malaka's supporters were not the only Marxists who eschewed the PKI and its identification with an international Communist movement. There were many Muslims, including women, active in the labor movement. They readily drew on Marxist critiques of capital, adapting these analytical frameworks to the Indonesian political realities. While the Indonesian labor movement has been the subject of rigorous studies by Ben White and Jafar Suryomenggolo, women's roles in the labor movement have received scant attention. More broadly, women have too often been excluded from patriotic narratives of the revolution, which have a strong tendency to confine their participation to supporting roles like manning the *dapur umum* (communal kitchens) that were indispensable to the war effort.[202] Not only are the political dramatis personae of the revolution overwhelmingly male, even the study of revolutionary cultural production, such as the publications of Angkatan 45 (Generation of 1945) writers, rarely include women.[203] Many women could and did participate as combatants in the revolution—including the PSII activist S. Yati, who founded and led the Laskar Wanita Indonesia (Indonesian Women's Militia).[204] They were also producers of and interlocutors in republican political discourse. Through newspaper articles and pamphlets, they sought to shape collective visions of a postwar Indonesia, as well as to direct the course of the republic's policies in the present. This segment will examine the writings of various female labor activists, primarily those affiliated with the Barisan Boeroeh Indonesia (BBI, Indonesian Labor Front), whose Islamic faith did not prevent them from invoking Marxist ideas when vigorously debating the desired shape of the republic. As Teeuw points out, this plurality of inspirations—encompassing Islam and Marxism among others—was characteristic of the Angkatan 45 intellectuals, activists, and artists who came of age during the Japanese occupation and the revolution.[205]

[202] Steedly, *Rifle Reports*, 54–55.

[203] For example, Teeuw's otherwise excellent study of Angkatan 45 art and literature barely mentions any women. See A. Teeuw, *Modern Indonesian Literature* (Dordrecht: Springer, 1967), 113–271.

[204] Steedly, *Rifle Reports*, 54.

[205] Teeuw, *Modern Indonesian Literature*, 135.

S. K. Trimurti helped found the BBI in September 1945. This was one of many revolution-era *badan perjuangan*, but she began her activist career as a journalist in the 1930s, when she covered labor issues relating to women. She would also become a prominent leader of the Partai Boeroeh Indonesia (PBI, Indonesian Labor Party), the party affiliate of the BBI, in 1946.[206] The BBI was consistently aligned with Sjahrir's and Amir's Socialist Party and had been prominent in both the Sajap Kiri and the FDR coalitions. During her time as the minister of labor (July 1947–January 1948) in Amir's short-lived second cabinet, she was responsible for passing the republic's first labor law. Despite several loopholes, not to mention problems of implementation, this constituted the first comprehensive Indonesian law to protect workers' rights in general and the rights of female workers in particular.[207] Trimurti was, like her husband Sajuti Melik, an independently minded Marxist. When Musso pushed for the amalgamation of FDR organizations into the PKI, she publicly resisted incorporation of the BBI and PBI, earning a public rebuke from Musso.[208] She was also a woman of conspicuous faith. In September 1939, just before she began serving a jail sentence for *persdelict*, she published an article in *Pesat* in which she wrote movingly about her faith in the face of impending incarceration: "Our religion teaches that all that God requires of us is for the good. What is now clear about this disaster is that the inner connection between my husband and me is based solely on holiness, and that foundation strengthens our prayers for our children."[209]

This religiosity is rarely, if ever, captured by academic studies of Trimurti, which tend to focus on her labor activism and journalistic activities. Trimurti's commitment to Islam was consistent. In May 1974, she wrote a short autobiographical piece for *Indonesia Raya*, titled "Wartawan Wanita Berkisah" (A Female Journalist Shares Her Stories). In it, she spoke not only of establishing newspapers like *Marhaeni*—the first Indonesian newspaper explicitly targeting female laborers—but also thanked God repeatedly for preserving her through her difficult activist years, repeatedly using *Alhamdulilah* (praise be to God) to signify her gratitude.[210]

[206] Soerjono and Anderson, "On Musso's Return," 63.
[207] Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia*, 177.
[208] Soerjono and Anderson, "On Musso's Return," 82. Musso called her a Trotskyist in response to her question on why the PBI should merge with the PKI, given the PKI's lackluster performance during the revolution.
[209] S. K. Trimurti, *95 Tahun S.K. Trimurti: Pejuang Indonesia*, ed. B. E. Henky and Teguh Mangil (Jakarta: Yayasan Bung Karno, 2007), 32.
[210] Ibid., 2–31.

This religiosity sat comfortably alongside a deep commitment to socialism, not at an abstracted level, but with a consistent focus on workers' immediate welfare. In the August 17, 1946, issue of *Kedaoelatan Rakjat*, Trimurti pointed out that the military ejection of the Japanese or the Dutch would not be sufficient for independence. The "opportunistic revolution" would have to be systematized to guarantee social welfare, which could in turn only be achieved through the expulsion of foreign capitalists and the nationalization of lucrative businesses like commodity plantations.[211] Amid the chaos of revolution, Trimurti had presciently identified the Indonesian economy's key structural problems that would continue to plague successive governments. In the October 21, 1946, issue, she condemned the excessive reliance on Dutch firms as sources of taxable revenue, arguing that the prominence of the *orang particulier* (white-collar employees of Dutch firms) had to be limited, or the republic's economy would increasingly be drawn into a capitalist mold. Instead, she advocated the "socialization of society as soon as possible."[212] She understood the revolution to be part of a global struggle against the creeping hegemony of capitalism, rather than a nationalistic, anti-Dutch phenomenon; in the pages of *Kedaoelatan Rakjat*, Trimurti celebrated SOBSI (Central All-Indonesian Workers Organization) joining the World Federation of Trade Unions, writing that it was a step forward toward the destruction of capitalism.[213]

Trimurti's consistent focus lay on the suffering and immediate needs of the average laborer. She penned a series of four articles on the effects of plantation capitalism, based on her travels in South Sumatra during the revolution, that was published in *Pesat* beginning on September 6, 1951. She argued that commodity plantations (primarily tobacco) in Deli, South Sumatra, still evinced much continuity with the exploitative labor practices of Dutch plantation enterprises, which had been revived by the Negara Sumatera Timur during the revolution.[214] These claims were credible: even in 1950, approximately 30% of East Sumatra's arable land was leased to foreign companies for plantations, and 38% of the capital invested in these rubber, palm, and

[211] Ibid., 45–48.
[212] Ibid., 171–73.
[213] Ibid., 126–30.
[214] Ibid., 217–21. The Negara Sumatera Timur (East Sumatran Nation) had been a constituent part of the Republik Indonesia Serikat (Federal Republic of Indonesia, aka the Republic of the United States of Indonesia), the entity the Dutch had negotiated to replace the former NEI. It lasted from December 27, 1949, until August 17, 1950, when it was replaced by the unitary Republic of Indonesia.

tobacco plantations was British.[215] With such continuity between colonial and independent economic arrangements, it is hard to deny that foreign capital continued to dominate the new republic, and it is likely that old exploitative practices survived. She argued that the land rights of small cultivators—who had occupied land informally during the Japanese occupation and the revolution—were not being respected, while the minimum wage for plantation employees was unacceptably low, determined as it was by the Algemeene Vereeniging Rubber Onderneming (Avros, the General Association of Rubber Companies).[216] She also excoriated the continuing sexual exploitation of female plantation laborers, who were sometimes forced into becoming informal prostitutes or concubines, a practice with deep roots in Dutch plantation capitalism.[217]

Trimurti's Islamic sensibilities were especially offended by the exploitation of Muslim laborers on Deli plantations by *modin* (a village religious elder) during Lebaran (Eid al-Fitr), which marked the end of the holy month of Ramadan.[218] She angrily condemned the perversion of *zakat fitrah*, a collection of alms for the poor during Lebaran: instead of distributing alms to the poor, *zakat fitrah* was collected from poor plantation laborers, who were led by the *modin* to believe that they would not be accepted into paradise if they did not contribute. The result was that Trimurti witnessed many of the poorest laborers pawning their meager possessions to hand a paltry sum of *zakat fitrah* over to their *modin*.[219] These specifically Muslim sensibilities were, for Trimurti, imbricated in wider issues of class and gender, none of which could be understood without the critique of plantation capitalism offered by Marxist analytical lenses.

Trimurti called explicitly for cooperation between Muslims and leftists, especially in the context of protecting labor rights, which she understood as a fundamental concern in Islam. In "Kembali Kepada Rakjat" (returning to the people), published in *Kedaoelatan Rakjat* on June 7, 1947, she hailed the

[215] Lisa Tilley, "'A Strange Industrial Order': Indonesia's Racialized Plantation Ecologies and Anticolonial Estate Worker Rebellions," *History of the Present* 10, no. 1 (2020): 7.

[216] Trimurti, *95 Tahun S.K. Trimurti*, 222.

[217] Ibid., 223. For more on plantation concubinage and prostitution, see Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870–1979*, 31–33, 188–89.

[218] In the Indonesian context, a *modin* is a local religious leader who leads or organizes most Islamic rituals at the village level, from the elaborate rites of circumcision and sacrifice to mundane duties like sounding the call to prayer. See Clifford Geertz, "Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example," *American Anthropologist* 59 (1957): 40; Achmad Zainal Arifin, "Defending Traditions, Countering Intolerant Ideologies: Re-energizing the Role of Modin in Modern Java," *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 55 (2017): 268–69.

[219] Trimurti, *95 Tahun S.K. Trimurti*, 226.

Barisan Tani Indonesia (BTI, Indonesian Farmers Front), which had strong links to the PKI, as the foremost advocate for smallholders' land rights.[220] At the same time, she argued that the BTI's work was largely compatible with that of its rival, the Masjumi-sponsored Sarikat Tani Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic Farmers League) and even suggested that the two organizations consider merging.[221] Trimurti's belief in the possibility of confluence between Islam and Marxism extended beyond the practical to the philosophical as well. Later in her life, she contributed an article to the November 1977 issue of the Angkatan 45 journal, *Gema Angkatan 45*. Trimurti maintained the importance of unions and direct action, but she also argued that the desire for of social justice was intimately linked to humanity's conscience, which was in turn "inextricably tied up with moral, ethical, spiritual, and religious values."[222] She even argued that labor rights had to be respected precisely because "As creations of God, all humanity is unified, and tied to each other with the bonds of universality," and therefore, "All men are brothers."[223]

Trimurti's religiosity, Marxist frames of reference, and keen attention to the intersections of gender and class were eloquently displayed in her address to the Kongres Barisan Buruh Wanita Indonesia (Indonesian Women's Labor Front Congress), held in Kediri on January 25 and 26, 1946. The beginning of her speech showcased a straightforwardly Marxist understanding of capitalism: she affirmed that "the working class has existed ever since the emergence of capitalism," and that "[workers] are forced to accept the wages set at their employers' leisure because they did not have any ownership of the means of production [*productiemiddelen*] or the surplus value of their labor [*hasil perkerjaannya*]."[224] Incidentally, her copious use of Dutch terms mixed with Indonesian, such as *productiemiddelen*, *perjuangan principeel* (principled struggle), *perjuangan incidenteel* (incidental struggle), and *hak verlof* (right to vacation), is revealing.[225] This hybrid Marxist lexicon was part of the process of translating the world to Indonesia; this process involved Dutch-educated individuals like Trimurti articulating European concepts

[220] While strongly influenced by the PKI, the BTI was by no means a PKI subsidiary. See George Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, 284.
[221] Trimurti, *95 Tahun S.K. Trimurti*, 174–79.
[222] Ibid., 204.
[223] Ibid., 205.
[224] Ibid., 118.
[225] Ibid., 118–19. By principled struggle, Trimurti meant the attempt to change the structural features of capitalism. This stood in contrast to incidental struggle, which she saw as the ultimately ephemeral attempts to meet the immediate needs of laborers, such as striking for improved pay or the right to vacation.

like Marxism within an Indonesian idiom. Translated ideas sometimes lacked an obvious vernacular cognate, resulting in her linguistic eclecticism. This was exactly the same process that had produced Tan Malaka's *murba* and Soekarno's *marhaen*, but they had chosen to formulate their own indigenous categories rather than rely on heteroglossia as Trimurti did here. She even illustrated the relationship between a workers' party and its supporting unions with the Javanese term *loro-loroning atunggal*, two paths to achieving the same purpose.[226] This heteroglossia, a byproduct of translation, also illustrates the degree to which Indonesian Marxism was a partial descendant of Dutch Marxism. This line of descent was embodied not just in persons like Rustam Effendi, who straddled Tan Malaka's PP and the Communist Party of the Netherlands, but also in the influence of Dutch Marxists like Henriette Roland Holst (see Figure 3.4), whose surprising popularity in Indonesia will be examined in chapter 4.[227]

Trimurti's understanding of Marxism was deeply informed by the specific needs and rights of female workers. She argued for the establishment of a women's labor front on two grounds. First, she recognized that it would help mobilize hitherto untapped support for the labor movement by bringing more women into the workforce, simultaneously freeing women from traditional gender roles while amplifying the labor movement's influence. Second, she recognized that only such an organization would possess the necessary familiarity with the specific problems faced by female workers to advocate effectively on their behalf. Trimurti gave the examples of insufficient protections for pregnant workers and new mothers, such as the absence of guaranteed maternity leave, the unacceptable lack of respect for women in the workplace, and the dearth of crèches for working mothers.[228] At the same time, she openly championed the unity of purpose between the labor movement and Islamic labor organizations, praising the establishment of the Serikat Buruh Islam Indonesia (SBII, Indonesian Islamic Workers League) by Masjumi's Mohammed Daljono in November 1948. Instead of questioning the SBII's commitment to workers' rights as the PKI did, she lauded the SBII for "building a labor organization based on Islamic principles, which would fight for the material rights of Indonesian laborers . . . such that the will of God, who is sovereign over humanity, can direct humanity in the direction

[226] Ibid., 120.
[227] Anderson and Soerjono, "On Musso's Return," 70.
[228] Trimurti, *95 Tahun S.K. Trimurti*, 120.

he pleases."[229] She saw this as a great improvement over the Sarekat Islam of the 1920s, praising Muslims for their newfound awareness of labor's importance.[230] For Trimurti, being a good Muslim necessarily involved struggling to guarantee the rights and improve the lives of ordinary workers.

It was this ecumenical discourse of solidarity that laid the foundation for broad-based women's organizations like Gerwis (Gerakan Indonesia Wanita Sedar, Movement of Conscious Indonesian Women), which attracted both Muslim and Communist feminists. Gerwis was founded 1950, and later evolved into the PKI-influenced Gerwani in 1954; chapter 4 will analyze both organizations in further detail. A significant portion of Gerwis's rank-and-file membership had attended courses on women's rights activism taught by Trimurti herself during the revolution. These courses were organized by the Barisan Buruh Wanita (BBW, Women Laborers Front), a subsidiary of Trimurti's BBI.[231] Despite her clearly Marxist orientation, Trimurti was too independent for the PKI, and the party blocked her bid to become chairperson of Gerwis during its first conference in 1951. With Suwarti as chair and Trimurti and Umi Sarjono as vice chairs, all of Gerwani's top leaders had close links to the BBI and BBW.[232] With its sensitivity to how issues of class and gender intersected, all the while resisting PKI interference, Gerwis had significant appeal to female Muslim activists. S. Yati, the PSII women's wing leader whose writings were examined in chapter 2, remained a staunch supporter of Gerwis and Gerwani until 1965. Other prominent Muslim women who publicly supported Gerwis in the 1950s included Nyai Utami Suryadharma, Nyai H. Subandrio, and Nyai Aminah Hidayat, the last of whom actually joined Gerwani as a member.[233] Gerwis members were perfectly cognizant of the organization's Marxist inspirations but did not perceive this as an obstacle to addressing Islamic ethical concerns. When Saskia Wieringa interviewed a former Gerwis member, Sukoni, in 1998, Sukoni explained how her revolutionary experiences allowed her to reconcile religion and politics:

> I joined Gerwis because I was asked to join and because I liked to help people . . . [also] because my husband was a member of SOBSI, and second

[229] Ibid., 153.
[230] Ibid.
[231] Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, 146.
[232] Ibid., 147.
[233] Ibid., 251.

> because I really wanted to help poor women. My first husband had joined a Communist guerilla group. But I never understood what he was doing during his long absences. I had already been married five years when I found out. I was very sad, for my grandfather had always taught me that Communists didn't have a God. My husband taught me what a Communist member was and what the struggle meant: that Communists believe in God and always had to behave in a simple, modest way, and that they had to help other people. Then he died in an accident. When I was a widow, I joined Gerwis.[234]

The ability of Gerwis members and supporters to reconcile Islam and Marxism, as Trimurti herself had, owed much to the revolutionary environment, as Sukoni's story poignantly illustrates. They found their own ways to reconcile their women's rights activism with their religious identities and class consciousness in organizations like Gerwis.

Trimurti's commitment to labor rights, women's rights, and her own Islamic faith was articulated within the broader context of labor discourse during the revolution. Newspapers that were closely connected to the labor movement, such as the BBI's *Soeara Boeroeh* (jointly published by BBI and SOBSI from 1947 onward) and the PBI's *Boeroeh* provide a sense of the discursive milieu that shaped and enabled Trimurti's activism. Beginning publication in late 1945 in the republican capital of Yogyakarta, *Boeroeh* had been closely linked to the BBI and Trimurti herself from the beginning of the revolution.[235] *Boeroeh*'s Marxist inspirations were juxtaposed against identifiably Islamic and Javanese sensibilities. The front pages brandished headlines like "Workers of the World, Unite!" while articles titled "The International Labor Movement" invoked working-class solidarity in both capitalist and Communist societies, describing Marx as "the father of the worker's movement."[236] At the same time, each issue of *Boeroeh* possessed a cover page that displayed the date in the Gregorian, Javanese, and Islamic calendars. For example, the September 30, 1946, issue provided the date as 1365H (*hijri*), while also mentioning that it was *kliwon*, the fifth day of the five-day Javanese calendrical week.[237] The point here is not that *Boeroeh* was definitively Islamic

[234] Saskia Wieringa, "Interview, Sukoni, 23 December 1998," in Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, 145.

[235] Officially, *Boeroeh* became the official newspaper of the PBI when it was founded on September 15, 1945, as the formal political arm of the BBI.

[236] Habromarkoto, "Gerakan Boeroeh International," *Boeroeh*, September 30, 1946.

[237] Ibid.

in character, but rather that a plurality of identities and allegiances could comfortably coexist within the revolutionary framework. It was possible for labor activists in the BBI and PBI to be simultaneously Javanese, Muslim, and Marxist without having to explicitly defend that hybridity.

This easy commingling of identities and ideas could also be seen in the main BBI organ, *Soeara Boeroeh*. First published as a monthly magazine in Jakarta in 1946, it was deeply sympathetic to Communism, though the PKI had no formal relationship with it. It was didactic, devoting much of its content to explaining how Marxist ideas and policies could be made relevant to Indonesia. At the same time, much of its language hinted at its contributors' Islamic frames of reference. The BBI was straightforwardly Marxist in its ideological identification, advertising Indonesian translations of the *Communist Manifesto* as well as running articles explaining the relationship between labor and capital.[238] At the same time, it trumpeted an inclusive vision for Indonesian labor; multiple articles argued that women's participation was integral to the success of the struggle for labor rights, calling women "coequal partners in the Communist struggle."[239] Many contributors, such as Sri Juliani and Marhaeni (pseudonym), were women, consistent with Trimurti's prominent role in the BBI. This inclusiveness extended to how *Soeara Boeroeh* dealt with religion as well. In the December 1946 issue, *Soeara Boereoh* published the SOBSI manifesto in full, appending its commentary to the manifesto. In the commentary, the editors proclaimed that "SOBSI is constituted with no favor to any particular race, religion, or gender."[240] Other articles used religious analogies to make Marxism more easily comprehensible to their readers. In the February 1947 issue, Sri Juliani explained that Marxism was adaptive and flexible rather than dogmatic, and that it was open to interpretation based on the needs of the moment. By way of analogy, she urged readers to consider how religions had evolved and been articulated differently in different times and places; Marxism was much the same.[241]

This echoed the PBI's ideology, laid out in Trimurti's *A.B.C. Perdjuangan Buruh* (1948). This pamphlet evinced a deeply Marxist didacticism

[238] B. A., "Modal dan Boeroeh," *Soeara Boeroeh*, February 1947 (Year 2, no. 18); Advertisement, page 3, March 1947 (Year 2, no. 19).

[239] Anonymous, "Wanita Dalam Sosialisme," *Soeara Boeroeh*, November 1946 (Year 1, no. 14); Anonymous, "Boeroeh Wanita dalam Perdjoangan Boeroeh," *Soeara Boeroeh*, October 1946 (Year 1, no. 11); Anonymous, "Pedjoang Wanita Kedepan," *Soeara Boeroeh*, July 1946 (Year 1, No. 1).

[240] SOBSI, "Keterangan Azas dan Pendirian Oemoem SOBSI," *Soeara Boeroeh*, December 1946 (Year 1, no. 15).

[241] Sri Juliani, "Marxisme Indonesia?," *Soeara Boeroeh*, February 1947 (Year 2, no. 18).

that simultaneously sought to assuage religious concerns. Without ever mentioning the PKI or the USSR, this pamphlet provided a concise explanation of Marx's ideas about the recurrent crises of capitalism and argued that imperialism was an outgrowth of capitalism.[242] These explanations were followed by short quizzes that readers could complete to test their familiarity with the ideas presented. It also refuted the assumption made by "narrow-minded religious people" that a socialist society was atheistic and therefore undesirable.[243] As Trimurti succinctly put it, "Every religion, every holy book, including the Gospels and the Qur'an, teaches humanity not to oppress one another, but instead to love one another. . . . However, look at how social relations [*pergaulan hidup manusia*] are organized under capitalism? Oppression and exploitation are everywhere, and everything is objectified and reduced to its monetary value."[244] In contrast, Trimurti claimed that "every religion, at its core, harbors the essence [*sari-sari*] of socialism," and since socialism regulated secular or material matters while guaranteeing the freedom of religion, religious citizens had nothing to fear from a socialist society.[245] Trimurti was echoing Tjokroaminoto's interpretation of socialism, framing religious ethics as inextricably tied to social justice.

A clearer indicator of how Islamic frames of reference suffused labor discourse was the repeated use of the term *nafsu* in *Soeara Boeroeh*.[246] An open letter from the editorial board, published in the October 1946 issue, repeatedly used the terms *Insja'Allah* (God willing) and *nafsu*, with the former functioning as a shibboleth for inclusion in the ummah. *Nafsu* is not necessarily an Islamic term, although its etymological roots are certainly Islamic, and it is almost always associated with religion-derived moral and ethical norms. However, its sheer number of permutations in this article was highly suggestive of the way in which Islam permeated the lived reality of labor activists: the editors wrote of *nafsu kebendaan* (the lust for material wealth), *nafsu milik* (the lust of ownership or possession), and *nafsu perseorangan* (individual or human-directed lust), to name just a few.[247] Other articles spoke of the "capitalist *nafsu* of constantly searching for profit" or the "*nafsu* of imperialism," satirizing Churchill and Wall Street bankers as *djago* (cocks)

[242] S. K. Trimurti, *A.B.C. Perdjuangan Buruh* (Jogjakarta: Pusat Pimpinan Partai Buruh Indonesia, 1948), 15.
[243] Ibid., 14.
[244] Ibid., 23.
[245] Ibid., 23–24.
[246] See chapter 1 for a sustained discussion of the *nafsu*/*akal* dichotomy.
[247] Redaksi, "Manoesia dan Masjarakat," *Soeara Boeroeh*, October 1946 (Year 1, no. 13).

enslaved to these forms of *nafsu*.[248] The term *djago* is particularly interesting, because its use in this context suggests that Churchill and Wall Street bankers were not only preening and puissant wielders of power, but also that they lay outside of the ordered realm of rational (*akal*) society; they were potent but potentially threatening within an Islamic and Javanese framework.[249] Through the deployment of such terms with strong religious associations, labor activists made sense of the revolutionary situation for themselves, and mediated Marxism for their readers.

Despite its clear Communist sympathies, *Soeara Boeroeh* also published poems with a distinctly Islamic flavor. One poem from September 1946 began with "Divine inspiration from God has already revealed / that all of God's creations possess the right to freedom" (*Ilham soetji Illahi telah tiba / Segenap makluk berhak merdeka*).[250] The term *Ilahi* refers to God—it is generally translated as "O Almighty God"—and was commonly used by Muslim politicians in Indonesia at the time. Masjumi's Natsir was fond of using the formulation *Ilahi jang Maha Esa* as an alternative to the Pancasila's monotheistic creed, *Ketuhanan jang Maha Esa*, precisely because the former signaled a specifically Islamic conception of God.[251] For a publication so openly supportive of Communism to be comfortable invoking Islam repeatedly, without ever seeing the need to explicitly address the compatibility of Islam and Communism, strongly suggests that many revolutionaries saw no need to square this circle. Presumably, the labor activists who moved in BBI and PBI circles saw no need to explain how exactly their Islamic identities fit with their Marxist political inspirations, as was the case with Trimurti herself. To be a good Muslim did not necessarily mean translating Islam into a system of a governance. One could be a good Muslim while remaining open to ideas, of disparate origins, on how best to organize a just and compassionate society.

All of this was only possible within a Marxist framework that was explicitly open to accommodating all religions. The labor activist I. N. Suprapti,

[248] Anonymous, "Abad Rakjat Djelata," *Soeara Boeroeh*, September 1946 (Year 1, no. 10); Anonymous, "Boeroeh Wanita dalam Perdjoangan Boeroeh," *Soeara Boeroeh*, October 1946 (Year 1, no. 11).

[249] The *djago* is a complicated trope in Indonesian society and can also be translated as "champion." Specific to this period, Robert Cribb and Benedict Anderson's explanations of the role of the *djago* provide the most comprehensive explanation of its meaning. See Robert Cribb, *Gangsters and Revolutionaries: The Jakarta People's Militia and the Indonesian Revolution, 1945–1949* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1991), 19–20, and Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944–1946* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972), 9–11.

[250] Marheini (pseudonym), "Marhaen Pertjaya," *Soeara Boeroeh*, September 1946 (Year 1, no. 10).

[251] Mohammad Natsir, "Salah paham dan ragu-ragu tentang pembetukan Prop. Sumatera Utara tidak ada lagi," *Suara Penerangan*, January 30, 1951.

a PBI member who later joined the Murba Party—eventually becoming an editor of the party's newspaper, *Murba*—published a short BBI pamphlet titled *Perubahan Kebudajaan Dipandang Dari Sudut Histories-Materialisme* (Cultural Change from the Historical Materialist Viewpoint) in 1949. This pamphlet was structured as a Socratic dialogue, in which the personifications of Body and Mind are conversing. Pak Budi (mind) was cast in the role of Socratic protagonist, with Tegap (sturdy) and Tegas (firm) as his interlocuters. Reminiscent of a Greek symposium, the three discussed Indonesian history and its future over the course of a meal. Most of the pamphlet was structured around Pak Budi explaining how human societies evolved according to Marxist historical materialism. It was highly didactic, and the ideas presented were deliberately kept accessible. Pak Budi had this to say about religion's importance in socialist societies: "Regarding religion, the people [*rakjat*] are absolutely free. One may choose to embrace any religion, or none at all. This is a personal right that should not be infringed upon by society, as happened in the past, when one religion was imposed on all."[252] Tegas went on to ask whether honesty and holiness would still be important values for a future Indonesia. To that, Pak Budi replied:

> Of course, they are important to humanity, but it cannot be denied that living conditions are important. This is not advice or propaganda enjoining you to abandon honesty and holiness. No matter how good the advice is, it will not necessarily enter the heart or thicken one's resolve. Moreover, remember that the clever capitalists also talk about politeness, humanity, morality, and holiness. Truly, it is only to mask their greed. Therefore, while advising politeness, humanity, morality, and holiness is good, you should know that it does not constitute a system for changing humanity's fate.[253]

Suprapti recognized that interior morality, whether religion-derived or not, was necessarily connected to exterior material conditions. Socialism provided a system conducive to ethical human behavior in a way that capitalism did not. Suprapti accepted that religion did (and indeed, should) play a role in the lives of individual Indonesians, but also in the realm of politics and society. Fundamentally, Suprapti argued that a socialist society could and

[252] I. N. Suprapti, *Perubahan Kebudajaan Dipandang Dari Sudut Histories-Materialisme* (Djokdjakarta: Sinar Asia, 1949), 27.
[253] Ibid., 36.

should facilitate admirable and ethical religious goals. This was symptomatic of a revolutionary environment that opened Indonesians to both religious and Marxist inspirations. The PKI occupies the bulk of scholars' attention in studies of Indonesian Marxism, but the revolutionary Marxist milieu was much more diverse. In the BBI and PBI, fragments and eclectic combinations of Tjkoraminoto's Islamic socialism and 1920s Islamic Communism lived on, finding fertile soil in the hopes unleashed by revolution.

Popular Print: Tamar Djaja's *Trio Komoenis Indonesia* (1946)

Outside of explicitly political material, it was possible to glimpse confluences of Islam and Marxism in popular consciousness. Tamar Djaja's *Trio Komoenis Indonesia* was already in its second print run by February 1946; it was published both times in Bukittinggi (formerly Fort de Kock), West Sumatra, by Penjiaran Ilmoe (lit. spreading knowledge). *Trio Komoenis Indonesia* is notable because Penjiaran Ilmoe was also used by Tamar Djaja, its managing editor, to publish many books on Islam well into the 1970s. These include Djaja's own *Nubuat Nabi Muhammad S.A.W* (1976, The Prophecy of the Prophet Muhammad), as well as Mohammed Natsir's *Islam Sebagai Ideologi* (1950, Islam as an Ideology).

Trio Komoenis Indonesia was a short biography of three famous Communists, influenced by *picisan roman* novelettes of the 1930s. In it, the narrative trajectories of Semaun, Alimin, and Tan Malaka reflected the plot devices deployed in *pacar merah* (red pimpernel) pulp fiction that presented fictionalized accounts of Tan Malaka's adventures in exile.[254] Short, single-page biographies of Lenin and Stalin were also appended to these sketches of Semaun, Alimin, and Tan Malaka, implying a sense of global proletarian solidarity while also serving as a didactic Communist primer. *Trio Komoenis Indonesia* was not a factual biography, but rather an anthology of exciting stories about Tan Malaka's, Semaun's, and Alimin's adventures abroad. Much of the dialogue was invented, and it even referred to Tan Malaka as *pacar merah* on multiple occasions. This book took liberty with facts, but it accurately expressed how widely admired the pre-1926 Communist leaders were during the revolution.

[254] Oshikawa, "Patjar Merah Indonesia and Tan Malaka."

This was published as part of a didactic series on political and civic literacy, which included books like *Pengetahoean Politik II (Tata Negara)*—primers intended to help readers understand terms like "republic, dominion status, commonwealth, protectorate, mandate, self-rule, democracy, autocracy, and aristocracy."[255] The popularity of such books, in a time of public debate over whether and how to continue delicate negotiations with the Dutch, is not surprising. Other books in this series included biographies of Soekarno, Hatta, Amir Sjarifuddin, Sjahrir, Muhammad Yamin, and Djamaluddin Tamin, all of whom were influenced by Marxism to varying degrees. Penjiaran Ilmu was thus likely driven more by profit than ideology, catering to the tastes of the West Sumatran reading public. This series demonstrates how Islam and Marxism could coexist comfortably, almost unremarkably, within a publisher's catalog, while the publisher remained profitable. The topics that gripped the imagination of the West Sumatran reading public ranged from Natsir's conception of how Islam ought to guide the state, to biographies of famed Communists and socialists. Even if Penjiaran Ilmoe was selling different books to disparate demographics, the ease with which it toggled between Islam and Marxism, as well as Tamar Djaja's own authorship of books on both Islam and Marxism, suggests a kind of unquestioned comfort in straddling these topics.

That comfort was evident in the text of *Trio Komoenis Indonesia* itself. The section on Tan Malaka's PARI, which Tan Malaka set up to succeed the PKI after 1927, named Rahman Djamal as a key activist. According to the text, Rahman Djamal replaced Djamaluddin Tamin as the operative in charge of propaganda sometime during the mid-1930s.[256] Tamar Djaja took pains to stress that Djamal was a serious Muslim, who planned on studying Islam in India and performing the hajj. After being denied an NEI passport, Djamal resolved to join PARI instead. This implied equivalency of these activities is suggestive, implying that being a good Muslim could involve making the pilgrimage to Mecca, but could also involve joining a clandestine Communist anticolonial organization. This, of course, was perfectly consonant with Tan Malaka's own approach to Islam. It is also interesting that this anecdote about Djamal made it into a biography about three more prominent people. Djamal would not even be included in the dramatis personae of this "novelette," if it had one. Moreover, *Trio Komoenis Indonesia* also included an excerpt

[255] Tamar Djaja, *Trio Komoenis Indonesia* (Bukittinggi: Penjiaran Ilmoe, 1946), 56.
[256] Ibid., 10–11.

from another book by Muhammad Yamin, a known admirer of Tan Malaka. It was titled *Tan Malaka: Bapak Republik Indonesia* (Tan Malaka: Father of the Indonesian Republic). In this excerpt, Yamin portrayed Tan Malaka as a hero of the independence movement, comparable to Manuel Quezon in the Philippines, and pronounced this benediction over him: "Truly, God is great . . . under the protection of the Republic, the father of the nation, Tan Malaka, defends the workers, *romusha*, and proletariat of Indonesia."[257]

This eclectic imbrication of Islam and Marxism by Tamar Djaja was perfectly consistent with his prerevolutionary writings. Before the war, Djaja had published in explicitly Islamic periodicals on issues of Muslim concern. His writings appeared in *Pedoman Masjarakat*, which was an unambiguously Islamic newspaper run by Hamka and Yunan Nasution. Many other prominent pergerakan activists with an Islamic bent published in it, including Natsir, Soekarno, and Hatta. It was widely considered to be a prestigious *kaum muda* publication whose readers and contributors went on to form the core of Masjumi's leadership and its support base. Its Islamic orientation was clear: articles included explanations of excerpts from the Qur'an and a series on the history of the classical Islamic empires. Serialized articles covered the history of Islam in India and Thailand, while other articles focused on the ideas of the Egyptian modernist scholar Muhammad Abduh. It also had an intolerant side and promoted anti-Ahmadiyya organizations.

Even *Pedoman Masjarakat*, however, drew on a surprisingly wide range of influences. Some issues began with quotes from prominent European thinkers and writers, such as Tolstoy; others covered Rosseau's social contract, and some expounded on American history. Like many of the publications studied in this chapter, *Pedoman Masjarakat* was an exercise in translating the world to Indonesia, reflecting the autodidactic and open-minded worldviews of pergerakan activists. To such a periodical, Tamar Djaja contributed articles like "Refuting False Accusations against Islam," which railed against Christian insinuations that the Prophet was a lustful man, apparently because he had multiple wives, or because he married his first wife Khadijah for material gain.[258] *Pedoman Masjarakat* even published articles that—albeit grudgingly—admitted the desirability of socialism for the Indies.[259] This provides a sense of the eclectic milieu in which

[257] Ibid., 53. *Romusha* refers to laborers tricked or conscripted by the Japanese into labor brigades, many of whom died under horrific working conditions.

[258] Tamar Djaja, "Mengoepak toedoehan palsu kepada Islam," *Pedoman Masjarakat*, November 5, 1935.

[259] Damanhoeri Djamil, "Boeat Pedoman Masjarakat," *Pedoman Masjarakat*, May 27, 1936.

Tamar Djaja had come of age, which engendered confluences of Islam and Marxism during the revolution. This lack of perceived friction between faith and political convictions was partially the legacy of the 1930s pergerakan milieu.[260] Like many pergerakan activists of his generation, Tamar Djaja was not plagued by the need to actively reconcile the two.

Localized Syncretism: "To Mecca via Moscow!"

Outside the power centers of Jakarta and Yogyakarta, localized syncretic movements found their own ways of blending Islam and Marxism. One such movement was the memorably named PKI Lokal Islamy (Local Islamic Communist Party of Indonesia). The PKI Lokal Islamy was founded in Maninjau, West Sumatra, in April 1946, "pledging" its allegiance to Tan Malaka's brand of Communism and celebrating his refusal to negotiate with the Dutch.[261] However, the PKI Lokal Islamy appears to have had virtually no relationship with the Sumatran PKI led by Bachtaruddin during the revolution. The PKI Lokal Islamy had its own particularistic raison d'être, largely independent of national politics.

Membership consisted primarily of *muridin* (lit. students, but in the Sufi context, disciples) of the Shattariyah *tarekat* (Sufi order organized around a spiritual lineage), who were apparently convinced to profess Communism through the influence of fellow Minangkabau with PARI links.[262] This was no doubt partially due to Tan Malaka's near-legendary status as a long-standing activist linked to the Comintern as well as multiple Asian Communist movements, a reputation amplified by his remarkable ability to evade capture and by the *picisan roman* pulp novels that fictionalized his adventures in exile.[263] Leon Salim, one of the key Sumatran Pendidikan activists with close links to PARI himself, was of the opinion that PKI Lokal Islamy members pledged themselves to Tan Malaka without really understanding his ideas. For them, Tan Malaka was a symbol of Minangkabau anticolonial

[260] Keith Foulcher, "Literature, Politics and the Indonesian Revolution," in *Text/Politics in Island Southeast Asia: Essays in Interpretation*, ed. D. M. Roskies (Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1993), 228–29.

[261] A. A. Navis, "Alur Kebudayaan Tingkat Laku Gerakan Politik Di Minangkabau," in *Dialektika Minangkabau Kemelut Sosial Politik* (Padang: Genta Singgalang Press, 1983), 88; H. Amura, *Sejarah Revolusi Kemerdekaan Di Minangkabau (1955–1950)* (Jakarta: Pustaka Antara, 1979), 62.

[262] Navis, "Alur Kebudayaan Tingkat Laku Gerakan Politik Di Minangkabau," 89.

[263] Oshikawa, "Patjar Merah Indonesia and Tan Malaka," 10–16.

resistance and fortitude, in which they could invest their desired meanings.[264] Apparently, at Shattariyah meetings in West Sumatra, *muridin* would greet each other with a gesture resembling a military salute: open palms with their fingers closed against each other, but at the level of the nose instead of forehead. They would then turn to the right to hail (*mengucapkan salam*) the Prophet Muhammad, then turn to the left to do the same for Tan Malaka.[265] Even more pointedly, Hamka recalled that the PKI Lokal Islamy's motto was "To Mecca via Moscow!"[266]

The former revolutionary governor of West Sumatra, S. M. Rasjid, claimed that the PKI Lokal Islamy had its roots in an underground Communist organization called PEKOM, which was founded during the Japanese occupation and led by an influential Islamic teacher named Abdul Gani Syarif.[267] According to Rasjid, Gani had reformed PEKOM as the PKI Lokal Islamy shortly after the declaration of independence on August 17, 1945, and it was influential enough that it had a strong presence in Pariaman, Manindjau, and southern Pasaman.[268] In the eyes of republican leadership, the PKI Lokal Islamy were a rogue element. Rasjid described members of the PKI Lokal Islamy as fanatics who were "deeply committed to doing whatever their leaders told them to do," and accused them of "refusing to obey the commands of the republican government, even sabotaging its efforts."[269]

The PKI Lokal Islamy was sufficiently troublesome that the republican army eventually dispatched troops from Bukittinggi, led by Hasan Bisri, to corral its leaders. Gani himself, and around ten other PKI Lokal Islamy leaders including his lieutenant Datuk Kelabu, were captured in Lubukbasung and detained in Bukittinggi.[270] This was by no means unusual: the Baso branch of the Sumatran PKI, led by former Digoel detainees Tuanku Nan Putih and Tuanku Nan Hitam, had also been targeted by the army for its ill-disciplined reaving across the countryside. Clashes between the army and unruly militias occurred regularly during the first half of the revolution (until the military

[264] Leon Salim, "Interview with Leon Salim," interview by Audrey Kahin, June 8, 1985, 11.
[265] Navis, "Alur Kebudayaan Tingkat Laku Gerakan Politik Di Minangkabau," 89.
[266] Hamka, *Kenang-Kenangan Hidup*, vol. 4 (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1975), 50. As noted in chapter 1, confluences of Sufi spirituality and Marxism were not unheard of in other Islamicate societies. See Raza, "The Sufi and the Sickle."
[267] S. M. Rasjid et al., *Sejarah Perjuangan Kemerdekaan Republik Indonesia Di Minangkabau (1945–1950)* (Jakarta: Badan Pencetakan Sumatra Barat, 1979), 364; Hamka, *Kenang-Kenangan Hidup*, 49.
[268] Rasjid et al., *Sejarah Perjuangan*, 364.
[269] Ibid.
[270] Ibid., 365.

rationalization undertaken by the Hatta cabinet in February 1948), not just on Sumatra but across the archipelago. However, unlike the Baso PKI, PKI Lokal Islamy leaders were judged sufficiently loyal to the republic to be released after interrogation and "rectification" of their attitudes.[271] The PKI Lokal Islamy would continue in a diminished form well into the 1950s but commanded little support in West Sumatra both before and after the 1955 elections, in which it failed to win any parliamentary seats.[272]

The broader context that made possible the existence of the PKI Lokal Islamy in the first place is the real object of interest. The primary enabling factor was the prevailing spirit of solidarity between different Minangkabau republican factions. This spirit was significantly more robust in Sumatra than in Java. The armed wings of the PKI in West Sumatra were the Barisan Merah Indonesia (BMI, Red Indonesian Front) and Tentara Merah Indonesia (TMI, Red Army of Indonesia). Dutch intelligence suggests that they cooperated consistently with Masjumi militias like the Sabilillah and Hezbollah in local operations.[273] They even closed ranks with other republican factions during the Madiun uprising: governor Rasjid recalled that a Madiun-like uprising nearly broke out in West Sumatra in 1948, with the two TMI battalions under Bachtaruddin (Rasuna Said's half brother) and Nip Xarim (son of the Islamic Communist Xarim M. S.) making preparations to fight the republican army. Rasjid, apparently, successfully brokered an agreement between Bachtaruddin, Nip Xarim, and the local army commander Ismael Lengah, in which they committed to stand behind the republican government in Yogyakarta, thus avoiding the bloodshed that occurred soon after in Madiun.[274] Regardless of whether Rasjid exaggerated his role, the fact remains that Madiun-like bloodshed was avoided in West Sumatra.

Rasjid also claimed that during his tenure as governor, Tan Malaka's supporters (led by Abdullah Ahmad), PKI forces (led by Bachtaruddin) and Masjumi—dominant in the West Sumatran provincial legislature—got along well: "There was mutual respect and willingness to cooperate."[275] This solidarity was only partially a product of Minangkabau kinship relations and social norms that prized negotiation and reciprocity. It was also a reflection of

[271] Ibid.
[272] Gusti Asnan, *Memikir Ulang Regionalisme: Sumatera Barat Tahun 1950-An* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia and KITLV-Jakarta, 2007), 80.
[273] "Signalement Toestand Padang Begin Augustus '46," NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Rapportage Indonesië, 2.10.29, inv.nr. 486.
[274] S. M. Rasjid, "Interview with St. M. Rasjid," interview by Audrey Kahin, May 18, 1976, 23–24.
[275] Ibid., 23.

the overlap between Muslims and Marxists described in chapter 2, in which activists like Leon Salim, Darwis Thaib, Maisir Thaib, and Tamar Djaja all managed to square their Muslim identity with participation in socialist organizations like the Pendidikan. Moreover, many of these 1930s pergerakan activists like Leon Salim (Pendidikan) and Muhammad Yamin (Gerindo) maintained clandestine links to Tan Malaka's PARI via the Minangkabau diaspora.[276] By the revolutionary period, cooperating with Communists was simply not unusual because it had historical precedents, and numerous republican leaders had themselves been participants in these overlapping networks of prewar pergerakan activism.

Dutch intelligence generally corroborates the situation described by Rasjid and Leon Salim. Dutch intelligence reports should be read carefully, since they were prone to overstating the influence of the PKI and the danger of Communist insurrection. After all, forestalling the "radicalization" of the nationalist movement during the incipient Cold War was an important part of the Dutch argument for their continued presence in Indonesia. Nevertheless, the overall picture that emerges from these reports is one of remarkable republican unity. As early as August 1946, Dutch intelligence reported that the PKI's main fighting force in West Sumatra, the TMI, had begun to stockpile war material on behalf of Masjumi's militias (known collectively as Tentara Allah, God's Army) in the republican-held countryside, in preparation for the latter's withdrawal from the Padang theater of operations.[277] Another intelligence report from July 1948 pointed out that West Sumatra was unusual because "Even the PKI has pledged its full support of the [republican] government until full independence is achieved. It has even promised the government its full support against anti-republican movements."[278]

While there were certainly repeated instances of fighting between the TMI and the Masjumi militias Hezbollah and Sabilillah, the bulk of the internecine conflict in West Sumatra occurred between the official republican army

[276] Leon Salim, "Interview with Leon Salim," interview by Audrey Kahin, June 8, 1985, 4, 8. Despite being a core Pendidikan activist in West Sumatra, Leon Salim also described himself as a "follower" of Tan Malaka, and recalled reading smuggled copies of *Obor* (PARI's newspaper) as well as other PARI brochures. Muhammad Yamin apparently helped facilitate financing for PARI and Pendidikan activities through his friend, the banker Anwar Sutan Saidi.

[277] "Signalement Toestand Padang Begin Augustus "46," NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Rapportage Indonesië, 2.10.29, inv.nr. 486.

[278] NEFIS, "Anti-Republikeinse activiteit in SWK aanleiding tot openlijke Samenwerking van de Republiek op Sumatra met het Communisme," NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Rapportage Indonesië, 2.10.29, inv.nr. 486.

and the Islamic militias.[279] Dutch intelligence even noted attempts by the well-known Islamic Communist and former Sumatra Thawalib teacher Haji Datuk Batuah to attract Muslim support for the PKI through "Communist propaganda documents invoking Mohammedan religious predecessors" (though the Dutch judged this effort to be largely unsuccessful).[280] West Sumatran republican factions were unusually cohesive, and tended to cooperate even when they disagreed intensely with one another on whether to obey the republican government's orders regarding the Linggadjati and Renville agreements. Decades of conciliation made for a revolutionary situation in which the PKI could generally cooperate with Masjumi, and made possible the existence of organizations like the PKI Lokal Islamy.

Secondarily, the genuine appeal of Communist ideas and slogans in West Sumatra's deeply Muslim society facilitated attraction to the PKI Lokal Islamy. Leon Salim recalled the Baso Affair, in which the republican army had crushed Tuanku Nan Putih and Tuanku Nan Hitam's branch of the PKI in the remote highlands of Baso, as a justifiable reaction to a radical and simplistic attempt to "apply" Communist slogans to village life.[281] He noted that both leaders were traditional Muslim leaders from the Baso area, and had received neither the modernist Muslim education available in West Sumatran towns like Padang Panjang nor the secular European education afforded by Dutch schools.[282] Their participation in the 1926–27 uprisings had been premised on Islamic resistance to Dutch rule, for which the PKI was simply the most effective vehicle at the time; he reckoned that they understood almost nothing of Communism.[283] Leon Salim himself, being both a Muslim and receptive to Marxist ideas, did not see anything fundamentally wrong with conciliating Islam and Marxism, but he characterized Tuanku Nan Putih's and Tuanku Nan Hitam's followers as "fanatics without limits."[284] They attempted to literally create a society of "same level, same feelings" (*sama rata, sama rasa*) by robbing and reaving, redistributing property, and killing those who opposed them.

[279] "Geheim Mailrapport no. 728/AGSU," NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Rapportage Indonesië, 2.10.29, inv.nr. 486.

[280] NEFIS, "Anti-Republikeinse activiteit in SWK aanleiding tot openlijke Samenwerking van de Republiek op Sumatra met het Communisme," NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Rapportage Indonesië, 2.10.29, inv.nr. 486. According to this report, Haji Datuk Batuah died in August 1948.

[281] Leon Salim, "Interview with Leon Salim," interviewed by Audrey Kahin, October 24, 1976.

[282] Ibid., 63.

[283] Ibid., 65.

[284] Ibid., 64.

Leon Salim explained that the PKI Baso only existed because slogans like *sama rata sama rasa* genuinely resonated with Minangkabau culture.[285] He argued that the members of PKI Lokal Islamy and the PKI Baso only understood the bare basics of Communism, but their affective identification with Communism could nevertheless happen because the Minangkabau were already a relatively worldly community (thanks to the practice of *rantau*, or male out-migration) whose social structures were markedly less hierarchical, more egalitarian, and more consultative than other Indonesian communities.[286] These characteristics made Communist slogans more appealing and Communist affiliation less taboo to the Minangkabau; this was a contradiction that they seemed able to reconcile with little angst, much as they had reconciled their proudly Islamic identity with the decidedly heterodox (in terms of *fiqh*) matrilineal structure of Minangkabau society.

This is not to suggest that there were no other dynamics at play. Martin van Bruinessen suggested, in his comparative analysis of Sufi militancy in Kurdistan and the NEI, that Sufi militancy was often the result of Sufi shaikhs becoming politically prominent influence brokers amid the collapse of traditional sources of political authority.[287] This process had certainly occurred in both the Ottoman Empire and the NEI during the late nineteenth century, and Sufi brotherhoods (*tarekat*)—particularly the Qadiriyya-wa-Naqshbandiyya—had indeed played significant roles in both the 1888 rebellion in Banten and the 1916 rebellion in Jambi.[288] Similarly, chapter 1 has shown how Sufis had a role to play in mobilizing support for the 1926–27 PKI uprisings in Banten and West Sumatra.[289] It would be entirely reasonable to characterize the emergence of the PKI Lokal Islamy as a reaction of a very similar sort, especially given the political vacuum created by the end of the Japanese occupation and the beginning of the revolution. Under such conditions, Sufi leaders like were able to consolidate their authority, raising armed bands to protect local interests or even reshape society in accordance with their ostensibly pious visions.

[285] Ibid.

[286] Ibid. For more on the peripatetic, egalitarian, and nonpatriarchal aspects of Minangkabau social structures, see Jeffrey Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs: Cultural Resilience in Indonesia through Jihad and Colonialism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

[287] Martin van Bruinessen, "The Naqshbandi Order as a Vehicle of Political Protest among the Kurds (with Some Comparative Notes on Indonesia," International Conference on New Approaches in Islamic Studies (Jakarta: Indonesian Institute of Sciences, 1986).

[288] Ibid., 15.

[289] Schrieke, "The Causes and Effects of Communism on the West Coast of Sumatra."

Without denying the validity of such factors, it is important to recognize that the emergence of the PKI Lokal Islamy had been preceded by at least two decades of conciliation between Islam and Marxism in West Sumatra. Since Tan Malaka's rise to prominence in the 1920s, Marxism had entered the Minangkabau consciousness, and it had been appropriated to various degrees by different actors. Some, like Hatta or Leon Salim, were comfortable mixing their cerebral Marxist analytical frameworks with their Islamic faith. Others, like Tan Malaka, were more explicit about the compatibility of Islam and Communism. The overlapping circles of Minangkabau pergerakan activists, most prominently between the Pendidikan and PARI but also between the Sumatra Thawalib schools and Permi, allowed Marxist ideas and rhetoric to circulate freely, while known Communists like Tan Malaka and former Digoel internees were elevated to the status of folk heroes. Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that some Muslims would bend Communism to suit their preferences, prejudices, and interests under the chaotic conditions of revolution.

Conclusion

Revolutionary exigency gave rise to a revolutionary consensus in the realm of politics, fractured and limited as this was. Nevertheless, this halting consensus brought supporters of the republic together in the shared endeavor of defending the republic's territorial, political, and economic integrity. It is easy to lose sight of how much different republican factions overlapped in their inspirations and aspirations. One thing they agreed on was the need to adapt the best ideas the world had to offer to determine the composition of the future Indonesian republic. To do so, they did not hesitate to tap the intellectual frameworks and historical experiences of other societies, including Marxist precepts. That many republicans were also moved by Islamic ethical obligations did not interfere with this process of translation and adaptation; the future was theirs to imagine, and they did so boldly without feeling pigeonholed by their affective identification with the ummah, or the assumption that being Muslim foreclosed other political possibilities. The 1930s had enabled the Islamic socialism of Permi and PSII, heirs to Sarekat Islam's Tjokroaminoto, to flourish in a way that Haji Misbach or Nathar Zainuddin's explicit Islamic Communism could not. The revolution of the late 1940s opened even more possibilities, allowing the "religious socialists"

of Masjumi—most of whom had come of age in the 1930s—to imagine themselves as simultaneously part of the ummah and part of a global revolutionary subaltern movement to end European imperium. The Indonesian Revolution was but one front in a multifront war to end the injustices of the old colonial order, a war that would birth a more just world. It was in such a liberatory and optimistic environment that Hamka could briefly imagine identifying as a Marxist.

The revolutionary years (1945–49) differed from the repressive 1930s not simply because censorship of print culture had evaporated or because Indonesians felt freer to explore new possibilities in a rapidly decolonizing world. Though outside the scope of this book, the Japanese occupation (1942–45) was an important stimulant for the pergerakan, mobilizing Muslim organizations and nationalist youth in unprecedented ways, and providing long-exiled pergerakan leaders like Soekarno and Hatta some leadership opportunities and state-sanctioned public roles.[290] The occupation was also brutal, and it stifled pergerakan print culture for more than three years. It did, however, permit the imagination of new possibilities for Indonesia for an unprecedented number of Indonesians. Regime change after centuries of Dutch colonial rule—in the case of Aceh, decades rather than centuries—impacted all levels of society, and even the humblest agricultural laborer could not miss the sense of an age in motion. For most, Dutch rule was firmly entrenched in living memory and beyond. Generations had lived and died under colonial authority, and multiple armed insurrections and popular uprisings had been suppressed. By 1945, not only the Dutch empire but the entire edifice of European imperium in Asia was clearly tottering, having been dealt a mortal blow by the rapid Japanese conquest of Southeast Asian colonies in 1942. It was apparent to most that the dichotomous age of colonizer and colonized had passed, and something would have to replace the imperial amalgam that was the NEI. This was a historical moment in which bold new visions for (re)constructing Indonesian society were not only welcome but necessary, in which long-cherished possibilities could be explored as never before.

At the same time, the USSR had emerged as an alternative Great Power, outside of the calculus of colonized and colonizer, having successfully weathered the challenges of the Russian Civil War (1917–23) and Nazi invasion

[290] Harry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesian Islam under the Japanese Occupation, 1942–1945* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1958), 139–40; Cribb, *Gangsters and Revolutionaries*, 76; Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 25.

(1941–43), and gained new credibility as part of the wartime Grand Alliance. The militaristic fascism of Germany and Japan—Meiji and Taisho Japan having been much admired by the pergerakan in the 1920s and early 1930s—was discredited by 1945, especially for Indonesians who had experienced wartime requisition, rationing, and labor conscription. The civilizing benefits of imperial tutelage were less apparent than ever; even the staunchest defender of *ethici* "association" could not easily explain how the British, French, and Dutch had spectacularly failed to defend their colonies against an inferior "Asiatic race."[291] Into this fluid political landscape returned several hundred former Digoel internees, who had spent the war years in Australia publishing the newspaper *Penjoeloeh* (lit. the torch), organizing the Tan Malaka–oriented Parki (Partai Kebangsaan Indonesia) and the PKI-oriented Serikat Indonesia Baroe (Association for a New Indonesia), as well as gaining experience and knowledge through their contacts with the Communist Party of Australia (CPA).[292] Despite the many Communists among them, they received grudging approval for their activities from the NEI government in exile in Australia. They were bolstered by sympathetic Australian soldiers serving with the allied occupation forces, who brought an influx of Communist literature courtesy of the CPA.[293] With newfound credibility, experience, and hard-earned impeccable nationalist credentials, these pre-1927 Communists were feted upon their return to Indonesia.[294]

The cumulative effect of all these developments was to open a post-1945 discursive space in which Marxist ideas and rhetoric were more attractive, and more utterable, than ever before. Ideas that had possessed currency since the 1920s found fertile soil in which to root and flower in the last dregs of wartime *convivencia* between the United States and USSR. The crystallization of the Cold War and Stalin's "salami tactics" in Eastern Europe, so obviously at odds with the USSR's liberatory claims, would soon shrink this discursive space. For a few years after 1945, at least, it seemed perfectly reasonable to expect that the new societies that would emerge from the detritus of empires would sample and adapt the ideologies of a new bipolar global order, from the United States' representative democracy and separation of powers to the USSR's emphasis on revolution and economic redistribution.

[291] Gerald Home, *Race War! White Supremacy and the Japanese Attack on the British Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 34–48.

[292] Poeze, "From Foe to Partner to Foe Again," 75–76; Rupert Lockwood, *Black Armada* (Sydney: Australasian Book Society, 1975), 35, 141.

[293] Farram, "Revolution, Religion and Magic," 29.

[294] "Anonymous, "Rombongan Penghabisan dari Digoel," *Soeara Merdeka*, July 12, 1947.

This intellectual climate colored the Indonesian Revolution, encouraging Indonesian republicans to formulate innovative and eclectic political visions that freely drew inspiration from Marxist ideas. This was part of a process occurring across other former colonies in Southeast Asia, notably Malaya and Vietnam.[295] This sets the revolutionary years apart from what came before and after; a moment of unparalleled optimism in which bold new ideas were needful, allowing the richness of preceding pergerakan discourse to resurface and find new audiences and interlocuters.

[295] Harper, "The Malayan Spring"; Ninh, *A World Transformed*.

4

A Critical Ummah, a Conscious Proletariat

After the heady days of the revolution came the long and hard process of shaping institutions and crafting policies: competing visions for Indonesia's future could no longer be held in abeyance in the interest of defeating the Dutch. Despite the steady erosion of revolutionary optimism, a spirit of creative adaptation, of articulating specifically Indonesian political visions, permeated the parliamentary democracy period (1950–59). This period spanned the achievement of formal political independence in January 1950 to Soekarno's imposition of guided democracy, marked by the return to the 1945 constitution and the dissolution of the Constitutional Assembly (Konstituante) in July 1959.[1] During this period, parliament was the dominant conduit of political authority, and political parties jockeyed fiercely for power both before and after the 1955 general election. Unfortunately, this also resulted in a revolving door of multiparty coalitions and short-lived cabinets.

The visions for Indonesia put forward by various parties and cabinets were formulated in reaction to the recent privations of occupation and revolution, while also attempting to redress the structural inequalities and indignities of colonial rule. Some, like Masjumi, emphasized institutionalizing Islam as the state religion. Others, like Soekarno's PNI, focused on nationalizing key industries and securing Indonesia's strategic interests. The revolution had cost much in blood and treasure, but shared goals had lubricated political differences between republicans. All yearned for the prosperity and stability that independence had promised, but there was no consensus on how this could be achieved. After the revolution, the boundaries of party affiliation became firmer, but the intellectual inspirations of parties and individuals remained equally diverse. The eclectic and open-minded thought process

[1] Various dates have been proposed for the beginning of the guided democracy period, notably August 17, 1957, when Soekarno laid out his "conception" (*konsepsi*) of guided democracy in full during his Independence Day address. I adopt the restoration of the 1945 constitution, which gave President Soekarno far more pro forma executive powers than in the provisional constitution of 1950, as the starting point for guided democracy, since this was when parliament's loss of primacy was legally formalized.

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underlying the formulation of such visions was eloquently expressed in the first issue of the cultural journal *Gelanggang*, in an article most likely authored by the filmmaker Asrul Sani and his associates:[2]

> We are the legitimate heirs to the culture of the whole world, a culture that is ours to extend and develop in our own way. We are born of the common people; and for us this term implies the inchoate mass from which new and healthy worlds of thought and expression may be born. . . . We do not wish to limit by a name this Indonesian culture of ours. On the other hand, we do not understand it as the refurbishing of something old to be a source of self-satisfaction; we envisage it as something vigorous and new. For this Indonesian culture will be determined by the manifold responses made on our part to stimuli from every corner of the globe, each one of them true to its own nature. And we will oppose any attempt to restrict or impede a reexamination of our scale of values.[3]

This chapter is titled "a critical ummah, a conscious proletariat" because many Indonesians—like Asrul Sani—were convinced of the importance of cultivating a citizenry capable of formulating Indonesian solutions to the many socioeconomic problems they faced in the aftermath of the revolution, without conforming ideologically to Washington, Moscow, or Beijing. There were some Masjumi politicians who were particularly well disposed to the United States' brand of liberal capitalism, and some PKI members who admired the statist authoritarianism of the USSR and PRC. For most, however, these were not attractive models. They sought instead an Indonesian approach to socioeconomic development that would be as comfortable drawing on Marxist critiques of capitalism as on Islamic values. Given the intellectually freewheeling hybridity of this period, it is analytically unproductive to think in terms of neat categories like "nationalist," "Communist," or "Islamic." An authentically Indonesian subjectivity could draw inspiration from a multiplicity of sources. This Indonesian path forward could

[2] Asrul Sani (1926–2004) was an Indonesian poet and screenwriter strongly associated with the Angkatan 45, a group of intellectuals and artists who had come of age during the revolution. Like many of his generation, he was strongly influenced by Marxist ideas and was generally supportive of Soekarno's guided democracy.

[3] Gelanggang, "Heirs of Culture of the Whole World," trans. A. H. Johns, in *Indonesian Political Thinking, 1945–1965*, ed. Herbert Feith and Lance Castles (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), 237–38.

manifest itself in the desire for an Indonesian ummah that was, in the words of Masjumi politician Isa Anshary, "critical":

> The struggle will not achieve its goal if we are satisfied with an audience that is great in number, but which is composed of corpses who obey orders without question; who are devoted but lacking in conviction. This is the "discipline of corpses" seen in fascist and Communist countries. . . . Blessed is the ummah that has ulama capable of carrying out *ijtihad*, the basis of any jihad. Blessed is the Islamic struggle that possesses an ummah endowed with critical faculties.[4]

Alternatively, this aspiration could also manifest itself within a socialist framework, in the form of the PSI's desire for a citizenry composed of thinking individuals, regardless of whether they were blue collar or white collar, *rakyat* or *orang particulier*.[5] As Sjahrir put it, the desire was for a socialist society that consisted of "conscious" citizens:

> We want a society consisting of people and of individuals who are conscious of themselves and their rights, composed of fully developed and emancipated individuals who are also conscious of their responsibilities toward society, able and willing to work within its framework for the sake of the common good. We are convinced that such a socialist society can only be achieved by people who have developed to full consciousness and maturity . . . we will not be able to come closer to the achievement of socialism through compulsion, or by deceiving the people, or by abusing their ignorance, as is often being done by movements that also call themselves socialist.[6]

In the case of the PSI, there was a distinct continuity with the Pendidikan's pedagogical focus on educating cadres, on the triumph of *akal*, instead of rallying the masses through impassioned rhetoric.[7] It explicitly claimed to be inspired by Marxism ("as a guide, not as a dogma") and employed Marxist rhetoric, though it was so independent-minded that several scholars have

[4] Isa Anshary, "Ruh Intikad dan Idjtihad," in *Revolusi Islam* (Surabaya: Hasan Aidid, 1953), 31–34.
[5] *Orang particulier* refers to white-collar employees of Dutch or other foreign firms.
[6] Sutan Sjahrir, *Indonesian Socialism* (Rangoon: Asian Socialist Publishing House, 1956), 21–22.
[7] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 406.

cast doubt on its Marxist credentials.[8] What was indisputable, however, was the PSI's reliance on Marxist critiques of capitalism and its implacable opposition to the neoimperialist capitalism on offer during the Cold War.[9] The larger point is that Indonesians affiliated with the PSI, Masjumi, PNI, PKI, or other organizations, were deeply invested in the idea of cultivating an Indonesian national community that would organically develop its own way forward in an uncertain postwar world. Even the PKI focused much effort on pedagogical initiatives throughout the 1950s.[10] Their desires for a "critical" ummah or a "conscious" proletariat were expressions of the same impulse that militated against blindly accepting whatever the local imam said in the mosque on Friday, or uncritically believing whatever *Pravda* printed. Instead, the discursive climate of parliamentary democracy was one that encouraged intellectual independence and inquiry, allowing pious Muslims to explore and selectively incorporate Marxist ideas, while also allowing avowed Marxists to formulate distinctly Indonesian approaches to socialism.

The international context was conducive to this sampling and adaptation. Su-Lin Lewis and Carolien Stolte show that scholarship on the Bandung conference (1955), with few exceptions, has focused on diplomatic initiatives while overlooking the Indonesian context.[11] Not only did the Bandung conference emerge out of a specifically Indonesian environment—the politically chaotic, intellectually freewheeling, and emotionally positivist era of parliamentary democracy—it also grew out of a nascent Afro-Asian anti-imperial solidarity that was clearly visible by 1948 in the form of the Southeast Asian Youth Conference held in Calcutta. This incipient solidarity would go on to midwife the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as various "other Bandungs" at the substate level.[12] The world of anticolonial solidarity, partially overlapping with class-conscious proletarian solidarity, came to visit Indonesia in 1955. The Bandung conference functioned as a symbol, as well as manifestation, of Indonesian intellectual openness under parliamentary democracy. It was visible proof that Indonesians were indeed, as they claimed, heirs to world culture.

[8] Herbert Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962), 130; Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 411. The PSI had abandoned any mention of "class struggle" in its founding principles in 1952, aiming instead for "socialist society based on democracy."

[9] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 406.

[10] McVey, "Teaching Modernity"; Robert Cribb, "The Indonesian Marxist Tradition," in *Marxism in Asia*, ed. Colin Mackerras and Nick Knight (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 264.

[11] Su Lin Lewis and Carolien Stolte, "Other Bandungs: Afro-Asian Internationalisms in the Early Cold War," *Journal of World History* 30, nos. 1–2 (June 2019): 3.

[12] Ibid., 5.

Conference participants were happy to learn selectively from both sides of the Cold War divide while rejecting allegiance to either. Rejecting continuity with the colonial order, and simultaneously refusing to accept the neoimperialist realpolitik offered by the United States and the USSR, the nations gathered at Bandung represented a spirit of independent-minded inquiry that reflected Indonesian intellectual dynamism. In turn, the conference further galvanized Indonesian intellectual life. The Bandung conference was made possible by the positivist tenor of parliamentary democracy, but it also provided the international climate, networks, resources, and state patronage that facilitated the articulation of uniquely Indonesian solutions to the thorny questions of how to build prosperous and egalitarian postcolonial societies.[13] Put another way, the "other Bandungs" analyzed in Lewis and Stolte's anthology found domestic expression in Indonesia itself.

Lewis and Stolte acknowledge that the atmosphere of the Bandung conference, as well as that of the "other Bandungs," was distinctly left-leaning although not all participants were Marxists.[14] These conferences and the very real connections they forged between state and nonstate actors created conducive environments for formulating a multiplicity of Asian socialisms. Each was cognizant of specific cultural conditions prevailing in its own society, but also valued international solidarity and collaboration. The Burma Socialist Party and India's Praja Socialist Party were particularly good examples of independent-minded Marxists who felt free to criticize both Cold War superpowers and to formulate distinct national approaches to socialism built on democratic socialism, anti-imperialism, and Afro-Asian solidarity.[15] This was a conducive regional environment for Indonesian Marxism to evolve along its own trajectory, largely independent of Cold War dynamics.

The "Third Force" or "Third Camp" that postcolonial and anticolonial leaders sought to midwife in Bandung and other conferences encouraged the evolution of creative and diverse Asian socialisms. These ideologies took pride in their indigenous identities without attempting to recapture some ahistorical golden age.[16] For many Indonesians, those indigenous identities included Islam. As Stolte eloquently puts it, the environment was one of

[13] Ibid., 4–5.
[14] Ibid., 10.
[15] Su Lin Lewis, "Asian Socialism and the Forgotten Architects of Post-colonial Freedom, 1952–1956," *Journal of World History* 30, nos. 1–2 (June 2019): 63–66, 72.
[16] Ibid., 66. Concepts like the Third Force and Third Camp were formulated by independent-minded Asian socialists such as Ram Manohar Lohia of India and U Kyaw Nyein of Burma, not by Nehru or Soekarno.

"polyphonic internationalism that enabled the activists in this movement to imagine visions for Afro-Asia and Afro-Asian decolonization."[17] It was within such an environment that Islam and Marxism could coexist, and not only in Indonesia.[18] Islamic identity, with its attached norms and values, was accepted as a necessary part of the calculations of any would-be Indonesian Marxist movement, whether political parties like the PKI and PSI, or civil society organizations like the Barisan Buruh Wanita (BBW) and Gerwis. To be authentically Indonesian, and to formulate Indonesian socialism meaningfully, they would have to reckon with Indonesian Islam.

International context aside, the still-evolving norms of republican politics and the chronic instability of coalition governments during parliamentary democracy created a fluid political situation in which all kinds of parliamentary coalitions between Muslims and Marxists were possible. The dissolution of the federal Republik Indonesia Sarekat (United States of Indonesia), which the Dutch had brokered at the Round Table Conference of 1949, led to the formation of a unitary Republic of Indonesia in August 1950. This consolidation had the effect of introducing several new factions (the Sarekat Kerakjatan Indonesia and Fraksi Demokrat) into an already heterogeneous parliament. In the absence of proper elections, which the exigencies of revolution had prevented, the Indonesian unicameral legislature (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat) of the pre-1955 period had an understandably strong tendency to be as inclusive and representative as possible. For example, its sixteen constituent parties included representatives of minor parties such as the Partai Katolik (Catholic Party) and Parkindo (Indonesian Christian Party), which claimed to represent a total of four million Christians between them, out of a total Indonesian population of nearly seventy million. Numerous other smaller parties such as the Partai Murba, Partai Buruh (Labor Party), and Partai Rakyat Nasional (National People's Party, PRN), representing varied regional and class interests, also held parliamentary seats.

Until the 1955 elections, the main parliamentary players were Soekarno's PNI with forty-one seats, Sjahrir's PSI with fifteen seats, and Masjumi with fifty seats.[19] Taken collectively, small parties were so numerous that they effectively denied the major players the parliamentary seats required to

[17] Carolien Stolte, "'The People's Bandung': Local Anti-imperialists on an Afro-Asian Stage," *Journal of World History* 30, nos. 1–2 (June 2019): 130.

[18] Lewis and Stolte, "Other Bandungs," 10.

[19] Fifty seats remained after the PSII and NU broke away from Masjumi in 1947 and 1952 respectively, taking their parliamentary seats with them.

form majority governments. Instead, coalition governments were the order of the day. While parliamentary alignments shifted repeatedly, various combinations of Muslim parties (particularly the PSII and NU) cooperating with Marxist parties (including the Partai Murba, Partai Buruh, PKI, and PSI) at the parliamentary level were common during this period.[20]

The composition of parliament necessitated broad coalitions in the absence of a power-sharing deal between the major parliamentary blocs. Disagreements over the distribution of ministerial positions were endemic, and Masjumi in particular tended to resent the fact the number of prominent ministerial positions it received was out of sync with its large—if loosely organized—electoral base.[21] This often derailed negotiations with the PNI, pushing cabinet formateurs to seek coalitions with the numerous smaller parties, which could easily be enticed to support the government in return for relatively fewer, and less prominent, ministerial positions. Within the many short-lived cabinets, most lasting for less than a year, all kinds of eclectic combinations were possible, and these parliamentary coalitions generated an accompanying rhetoric of cooperation and solidarity. This rhetoric might have been easy to dismiss as a collection of fine but empty sentiments, if not for the long history of conciliation between Islam and Marxism in Indonesia.

For example, Ali Sastroamidjojo's first cabinet (August 1953–July 1955), which was convened by the PNI, secured the participation of PSII and NU ministers alongside those of Marxist parties like the PKI-linked Barisan Tani Indonesia (Indonesian Peasants' Front) and the Partai Buruh (Labor Party). Interestingly, two nonparty ministers in this cabinet, Iwa Koesoema Soemantri and Muhammad Yamin, both had strong Marxist backgrounds but were also known to be staunch Muslims. Masjumi, which was unambiguously anti-PKI, was scandalized by NU's participation in a cabinet that the PKI publicly supported, although the PKI had not been granted any ministerial positions.[22] Such governing coalitions of Muslims and Marxists were made possible by parliament's heterogeneity, and they in turn facilitated discursive conciliation between Islam and Marxism within other sectors of society, as the normalcy of Muslim-Marxist cooperation was established within the Indonesian political imagination.

[20] Masjiumi was an exception, resolutely rejecting any cooperation with the PKI.
[21] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 125.
[22] Ibid., 145.

Naturally, Muslim responses to the possibility of cooperation with Marxists were not monolithic. While the top NU leadership, including *Rais Am* (chairman) K. H. Abdul Wahab Hasbullah, Vice President K. H. Dahlan, and president of Anshor (NU's youth movement) Imron Rosjadi, had all clearly condemned the PKI, other prominent politicians like the leader of NU's parliamentary bloc A. S. Bachmid were perfectly prepared to cooperate with the PKI.[23] In October 1954, Bachmid publicly dismissed concerns that the PKI was on the cusp of power, and baldly stated that PKI-NU cooperation was founded on a "common understanding of desired goals," as well as plain "common sense."[24] In January 1955, the leader of NU's East Java branch, Murtadji Bisri, publicly disagreed with Masjumi's assumption that Islamic law and Communism were inimical; he argued that this was a polarizing discourse that could potentially undermine national unity.[25] In a similar vein, PSII president Arudji Kartawinata (S. Yati's husband) publicly affirmed that the alliance between nationalist, Communist, and Islamic parties in the first Ali cabinet was "based on obvious reasons."[26] On its part, the PKI made much of its openness to all religions, laying claim to Darsono's and Semaun's accommodation of Islam during the 1920s. The PKI's prime leader during the 1950s, D. N. Aidit, even publicly argued at a March 1954 rally in Malang that it was the PKI, not Masjumi, that was the true defender of Islamic values: "The Prophet was not a man whose ideas were like Masjumi's, his Islam was better than Masjumi's Islam. To vote for Masjumi is to wish for the world to go to hell. To join Masjumi is *haram* [forbidden], whereas to join the PKI is *halal* [permissible]."[27]

At a more informal level, cooperation and mutual regard often existed between Muslim and Marxist politicians, both within and without parliament. Madinier argues that Masjumi leaders at both the local and national levels worked to minimize conflict between Masjumi supporters and PKI members, because they "made a clear distinction between an ideological battle and their struggle against Communists, and often maintained cordial relations with their counterparts in the PKI."[28] Umar Suriatmadja, a Masjumi branch leader in Bandung, regularly invited members of the local PKI branch

[23] Ibid., 144.
[24] "Reparasi Kabinet Minggu Ini," *Abadi*, October 25, 1954.
[25] "Agama dan Politik," *Abadi*, January 10, 1955. Bisri's article was originally published in *Keng Po*.
[26] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 145.
[27] Organisasi Pembela Islam, *Peristiwa rapat P.K.I. di Malang, 28 Maret 1954* (Malang: Organisasi Pembela Islam, 1954).
[28] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 152.

to family and religious events, and was invited to their houses in turn.[29] Natsir himself, who became the dominant Masjumi leader from 1950 onward, was repeatedly seen having tea with his PKI counterpart, Aidit, at the parliamentary cafeteria during the 1950s.[30] These personal and professional courtesies were reflections of republicans' mutual respect for one another's credentials and goals, even if they disagreed intensely on policy. They would also help lubricate the friction generated by their ideological differences, enabling Marxist parties to regularly cooperate with Muslim ones in parliament and in government. After the 1955 elections, which saw the PSI lose a significant number of parliamentary seats and the PKI rise to electoral prominence, both main parliamentary blocs were composed of Muslim and Marxist parties. On one hand, Masjumi, PSI, Parkindo, and Partai Katolik were generally aligned; on the other, the PNI, PKI, PSII and NU were often in coalition under Soekarno's patronage.

Keeping in mind the conducive international situation, the fluidity of parliamentary politics, and the perceptible remnants of revolutionary solidarity, this chapter will examine confluences of Islam and Marxism both within and without parliament, among the republican elite and the nascent middle class, and in fiction as well as reality. Sources used include books published by Masjumi parliamentarians, transcripts of debates held in the Constitutional Assembly, memoirs of pious Communists, newspapers affiliated with minor Marxist parties and civil society organizations, as well as 1950s Islamic poetry and leftist arts magazines. This chapter shows how being "heirs to world culture" involved a process of creative adaptation on Indonesian terms and in response to perceived Indonesian needs.

Muslim Parliamentarians and the Allure of Socialism

Socialism exerted gravitational pull on Indonesian political thinking from the 1920s until the 1960s, and its enduring appeal was apparent among Muslim parliamentarians. As the preceding section showed, the international and domestic climate of Indonesia during the parliamentary democracy period facilitated Muslim engagement with socialist ideas in new ways, distinct from the Islamic Communism of Haji Misbach or Haji Datuk Batuah.

[29] Ibid., 153.
[30] Ibid.

The *kaum muda* that formed the intellectual backbone of Masjumi were particularly predisposed by their modernist *fiqh* to be open to ideas emanating from Europe and other parts of the Muslim world, although they were never uncritical observers.[31] Within Masjumi, Mohammed Natsir (1908–93) and his associates, primarily Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, Zainal Abidin Ahmad, Abu Hanifah, Kasman Singodimedjo, Jusuf Wibisono, Mohamed Roem, and Burhanuddin Harahap, constituted the core of Masjumi's modernist wing and were described by George Kahin as "religious socialists."[32] Not without cause did Sjahrir boldly proclaim that "among the many political parties in present day Indonesia, there is not one party that does not express its sympathies for a socialist and collectivist society, nor is there any party today that advocates unlimited free economic enterprise or free competition. We in Indonesia are all socialists, or at least, socialistically inclined and such is also the spirit of our constitution."[33]

From 1950 onward, these modernists became increasingly dominant in Masjumi, successfully competing with the older and more conservative wing of the party led by Soekiman for party leadership and ministerial roles.[34] Mostly Dutch-educated and fluent in several European languages (usually Dutch, English, and German), these Masjumi intellectuals were well read and familiar with European Marxist ideas. Their writings evince a strong acquaintance with Dutch Communist literature rather than Soviet propaganda, though none of them appear to have read Marx's or Engels's major works rigorously. Several of them even seemed ignorant of Marx's own bourgeois background and assumptions, aggrandizing him as a working-class champion in ways reminiscent of panegyrics associated with Sufi saints. As their references will show, their analyses of Marxism's relevance for Indonesia drew primarily on Western European Marxist and anarchist literature, from Pierre-Joseph Proudhon to Henriette Roland Holst, rather than Comintern publications. Marx's historical materialism was clearly transgressive for them, but they perceived in Marx's critique of capital important lessons for Indonesia and resonances with Islamic goals. Accordingly, they sought to synthesize Marxist ideas in a way that would positively shape Indonesia's socioeconomic structures, rather than to justify alignment with

[31] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 20.
[32] Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, 309–10; Fogg, *Indonesia's Islamic Revolution*, 173–77.
[33] Sjahrir, *Indonesian Socialism*, 30–31.
[34] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 46.

the USSR or the PRC. This section will explore the discursive output of these Muslim modernists to demonstrate their receptivity to socialism as well as their adaptations of it.

Masjumi marketed itself as an Islamic party, but this does not imply a coherent corpus of "Islamic" ideas. Madinier made a crucial observation about the diversity of ideas circulating within Masjumi circles: "The surprising discovery that there could coexist within a single group, and sometimes even within a single leader, two apparently contradictory positions leads one to the conclusion that, as far as Indonesia is concerned at least, the idea of a clear and unambiguous border between secularism and religion needs to be revised."[35] Madinier characterized Masjumi as a party that had little to no nostalgia for an imagined utopia in seventh-century Arabia, twelfth-century Baghdad, or even an Indonesian golden age (Islamic or otherwise). The references to Indonesia's past that did exist in Masjumi literature concerned Islam's role in mobilizing resistance to the Dutch, particularly during the Aceh, Java, and Padri wars.[36] This was not Islam incarnate as a set of codified laws, but Islam as activism, Islam as justice, and Islam in service to the nation. Madinier described this as the instilling of a "revolutionary spirit" in every believer: this articulation of Islam, especially in service to the imagined community, made it particularly amenable to conciliation with other creeds that also laid claim to a tradition of activism, justice, and service to the nation, such as the Tan Malaka brand of Communism.[37] Furthermore, the intellectual references of Masjumi publications, of which fifteen were examined by Madinier, were rooted in the European intellectual tradition rather than Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*) or jurisprudential interpretation (*ijtihad*).[38] This was an incarnation of Muslim politics that took as its starting point the feasibility of combining Islamic identity and broadly defined Islamic principles (instead of *fiqh*) with the political traditions of Europe and America. This openness made possible conciliations between Islam and socialist ideas.

One Masjumi intellectual whose Islamic faith was articulated in relation to socialist ideas was Jusuf Wibisono (1909–1982). He had cut his teeth as a pergerakan activist in the Bandung branch of the Jong Islamitien Bond (JIB, Islamic Youth League) during the 1930s. A close associate of Soekiman—Natsir's rival for the leadership of Masjumi—and part of Masjumi's "brains

[35] Ibid., xv.
[36] Ibid., 7.
[37] Ibid., 10.
[38] Ibid., 6.

trust" in his own right, he was a prolific writer who also served as finance minister in Soekiman's cabinet (April 1951–February 1952) and in Ali Sastroamidjojo's second cabinet (March 1956–March 1957).[39] In Masjumi's internal factional politics, the Soekiman-Wibisono axis was the counterpart to the Natsir-Prawiranegara axis: both Prawirannegara and Wibisono tended to serve in finance-related positions when their respective allies were in power. Trained as a lawyer in the Dutch Rechts Hooge School in Batavia, he was a close associate of both Mohamad Roem and Kasman Singodimedjo and left the JIB in 1934 to found the Studenten Islam Studie-club (Islamic Students' Study Club) with Roem in 1934.[40] During his time with the Islamic Students' Study Club, he edited the Dutch-language newspaper *Moslims Reveil* and came into contact with many of Masjumi's future leaders, such as Burhanuddin Harahap and Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, although the latter never joined Wibisono's organization.[41] Wibisono, like Natsir, Roem, Harahap, and Singodimedjo, was part of the Javanese contingent of modernist Muslim intellectuals who blossomed during the parliamentary democracy period. The Sumatran contingent—Zainal Abidin Ahmad, Yunan Nasution, and Abu Hanifah—had come of age in Medan during the 1930s, partially under Hamka's wing.[42]

Jusuf Wibisono's *Islam dan Sosialisme* was first published late in the revolution but reprinted at least thrice during the 1950s. By Wibisono's own admission, it was a direct descendant of Tjokroaminoto's *Islam dan Sosialisme* (1924).[43] Much of Wibisono's book was pedagogical in tone and clarificatory in purpose, attempting to explain Marxism to its readers rigorously. Instead of deploying rousing rhetoric or concise summaries, it provided substantial amounts of background information to help readers situate Marxism. In that regard, there were some similarities to Tan Malaka's didactic approach to Marxism in *Islam dalam Tindjauan Madilog* (1948).

Wibisono perceived a fundamental congruence between religious values and socialist policies. He argued that "socialism is not a political path [*aliran politik*] that can be ignored, especially not by Islamic parties, which have to determine their own attitudes toward socialism, just as Christians have done in the West."[44] Wibisono also situated the dialogue between Islam and

[39] Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, 152.
[40] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 47.
[41] Ibid., 48.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Jusuf Wibisono, *Islam dan Sosialisme*, vol. 1 (Djakarta: Pustaka Islam, 1950), 3.
[44] Ibid.

socialism within an older, broader discourse across the Muslim world. This was conversation that had occurred not only in Indonesia, but also in South Asia. He juxtaposed Tjokroaminoto's *Islam dan Sosialisme* (1924) against Mushir Hosein Kidwai's *Islam and Socialism* (1912) and Mouhssine Barazi's *Islamisme et Sosialisme* (1929); all three (and presumably Wibisono's own book as well) were presented as part of the same transregional Islamic debate spanning Syria, India, and Indonesia.[45] Notably, Wibisono criticized Barazi for paying insufficient attention to Marxist historical materialism, class struggle, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and theories of nation-state formation.[46] Like Kidwai and Barazi, Wibisono was shaped by his European education—which partially explains his attachment to the finer points of Marxist theory—and sought to adapt the intellectual fruits of Europe for productive application in Indonesia. This did not entail a wholesale importation of Marxist precepts, but selective incorporation in concert with Islamic values.

Wibisono's book was part of a broader effort, conducted in the climate of anticolonial solidarity that pervaded decolonizing societies during the 1950s, to articulate locally grounded postcolonial ideologies of socioeconomic justice that could replace colonial extraction. This effort was not manifest only in books and pamphlets: the Marxist Islamic scholar and labor organizer Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani (1880–1976) of East Pakistan spoke at the 1955 "People's Bandung" conference in New Delhi, invoking Allah's blessing on the participants and their efforts to promote global peace and socioeconomic justice.[47] Tjokroaminoto would probably have identified with Stolte's characterization of Bhashani: "The activism of people like Maulana Bhashani demonstrates that the question of whether he was a "Marxist or a Maulana [Islamic scholar]" was not one he would ask of himself. . . . Bahshani showed that both traditions belonged in the soil of Bengal."[48] Wibisono was engaged in the same effort as Tjokoraminoto, Bhashani, Kidwai, and Barazi, to interrogate what Muslim societies could usefully adapt from Europe while remaining true to their own values and identities.

[45] Ibid. The British-educated lawyer Kidwai (1878–1937) published his book in English in London, while the French-educated lawyer Barazi (يزاربل انسحم, 1904–1949) published his book in French in Paris. For Tjokroaminoto's plagiarism of Kidwai's book, See Fogg, "Indonesian Islamic Socialism and Its South Asian Roots."

[46] Ibid., 5.

[47] Stolte, "The People's Bandung," 148.

[48] Ibid., 155.

Wibisono began by making clear that many interpretations of socialism existed, and that their intellectual genealogies involved other contributors besides Marx.[49] He explicitly stated that his purpose was to highlight the points of compatibility and incompatibility between Islam and Marx's approach to socialism/Communism, as well as Lenin's and Stalin's applications of Marx's ideas.[50] This attempt to conciliate Islam and socialism was one that admitted the desirability of engagement, normalizing it as something that had already occurred in both Indonesia and other parts of the Muslim world. It was also analytically flexible and broad-minded in its approach to Marxism, treating Marx's ideas not as comprehensive dogma but as one among many contributions to the ideal of building a socialist society.

Wibisono's first two chapters ("The Origins and Meanings of the Word 'Socialism' " and "Various Paths to Socialism") were unambiguous exercises in translating Europe to Indonesia that displayed his erudition. He sketched the intellectual trajectories of socialism, making clear his opinion that socialism was related to but distinct from Communism. Drawing on a wide range of European intellectuals, he summarized the ideas of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Wilbur White, Hendrik de Man, and Marx, along with those of Robert Owen, Henri de Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier, and Mikhail Bakunin.[51] His list of referents was so long that he was limited to providing glosses of their ideas and how they fit into an evolving tradition of socialist thinking.[52] Unsurprisingly, Wibisono was deeply critical of Lenin and Stalin, arguing that the USSR had not lived up to Marx's vision, nor to Wibisono's understanding of socialism's goals. The USSR could only be called socialist to the extent that the Communist Party was in a position of total power.[53] To Wibisono, Marx's socialism, developed in dialogue with many other thinkers and activists, had been inappropriately incarnated as Soviet Communism. Soviet Communism was in reality an amalgam of Marx's theories and the dogmas introduced by Lenin and Stalin.[54] Wibisono argued that Lenin's dictatorial approach to implementing Marx's ideas was considered by many

[49] Wibisono, *Islam dan Sosialisme*, 1:3, 6–22.
[50] Ibid., 1:5.
[51] Ibid., 1:6–11.
[52] This intellectual genealogy, as well as its referents, resembles Friedrich Engels's *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*. Excerpted from *Anti-Dühring* (1878) and translated into French (1880) and English (1892), it was immensely popular for decades. It is possible that Wibisono might have read and been influenced by it.
[53] Wibisono, *Islam dan Sosialisme*, 1:21–22.
[54] Ibid., 1:23.

to be a betrayal of true Marxism, and that this form of Communism was represented by the discredited Musso in Indonesia.[55]

Armed with an appreciation for the multiplicity of socialism's intellectual progenitors, as well as his clear distinction between Soviet Communism and Marx's ideas, Wibisono went on to explore various formulations of religious socialism in the second volume of *Islam dan Sosialisme*. Drawing on the Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev (1874–1948), whose early attraction to Marxism had been tempered by Christian existentialism, a dogged emphasis on individual freedoms, and implacable opposition to the authoritarian state, Wibisono wrote that the Russian Orthodox Church was no longer considered an opponent of the state, nor religion considered the opiate of the masses.[56] However, he agreed with Berdyaev's assertion that this was only temporary: Christians who preached the compatibility of Christianity and Communism, like the Swede Gunnar Hedlund, had been expelled from the Third International.[57] Wibisono did not believe that Soviet Communism would ever truly accommodate religion, though it might make tactical concessions to that end. Instead, Wibisono explored a range of Christian intellectuals and activists who had theorized the compatibility of Christianity and socialism, including the Anglican clergymen Charles Kingsley and Frederick Dennison Maurice, whose Christian Socialist Movement (1848–54) had proclaimed Christian values as the only solid foundation for socialism, while agreeing with Marx's excoriation of capitalist economies in *Das Kapital*.[58] Drawing on the writings of the German Catholic Wilhelm Hohoff and the Dutch Reformed minister and parliamentarian Aritius Sybrandus Talma, Wibisono sketched the outlines of a European Christian socialism and labor activism upon which Islamic socialism could be modeled.[59]

In a section titled "Islam and Marx's Socialism," Wibisono argued that Islam was at least partially compatible with Marx's ideas.[60] Wibisono posited that Marx's concern for humanity, his aims, and his honorable principles (*tjita-tjita mulia*) "displayed the qualities of prophethood."[61] Marx

[55] Jusuf Wibisono, *Islam dan Sosialisme*, vol. 2 (Djakarta: Pustaka Islam, 1950), 5, 10.
[56] Ibid., 2:10. Wibisono was drawing from Berdyaev's *Origin of Russian Communism* (1937), which he had read in Dutch translation as N. A. Berdjaev and A. Kosloff, *Beteekenis en Oorsprong van het Russische Communisme*, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: Kompas, 1948).
[57] Wibisono, *Islam dan Sosialisme*, 2:10.
[58] Ibid., 2:17–22.
[59] Ibid., 2:18–20.
[60] Ibid, 2:24.
[61] Ibid., 2:22.

was described by Wibisono as almost an ascetic, and as being in a state of seclusion (*bertapa*), enduring his own physical suffering as well as that of his family with a "pure heart" (*kesucian hati*) in order to discern the root causes of the laboring classes' suffering.[62] "He struggled until his last breath to free the proletariat from their suffering," which Wibisono considered a touching (*mengharukan*) life story, embodying the values of "simplicity and sincerity."[63] This positioning of Marx within an Islamic, even Sufi, frame of reference is truly remarkable, and serves as an excellent example of how Marxism was necessarily refracted through the identities and cultural lenses of Indonesian Muslims when they came into contact with Marx's ideas.

To support his arguments, Wibisono quoted two Qur'anic verses and one hadith; the verses were Sura an-Nisa, 135 and Sura al-Balad, 12–16, although no reference was provided for the hadith. The Qur'anic verses exhorted Muslims to avoid injustice, to free bondsmen, to feed the hungry, to care for the orphaned, and to provide for the homeless.[64] Citing these verses, Wibisono argued that while Muhammad's teachings were not the same as Marx's call to "defend the proletariat against the capitalists," the historical context of Muhammad's era must be taken into account; the conditions of exploitation that Marx was reacting to were simply not present in Muhammad's day.[65] However, "The intentions behind these Qur'anic commandments were consistent with Marx's plan to build a workers movement that would oppose the injustices of capitalism."[66] Wibisono even pointedly used Marxist frames of analysis, acknowledging that it was unjust for capitalists to profit from the surplus value of the proletariat's labor.[67] At the same time, he drew on Qur'anic verses like Sura al-Bara'at, 34, to argue that the Qur'an prohibited the unlimited accumulation of capital, as well as unspecified , to posit that monopolistic trade practices were un-Islamic.[68] Extrapolating directly from the Qur'an to induce the values and goals of Islam, Wibisono perceived a fundamental compatibility between some of Marx's goals and those of Islam.

Wibisono did not arrive at this conclusion via an exercise in *fiqh*; he was effectively invoking *maqāṣid al-sharī'a*, the goals promoted by Sharia.[69] This

[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid., 2:23.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid., 2:26.
[69] *Maqāṣid al-sharī'a* was first conceptually laid out by the famed classical jurist al-Ghazali (d. 1111 CE) and can loosely be defined as the social goals promoted by Sharia. It is closely related to

was evinced by Wibisono's assertion that Muslims were not obligated to promote "specific material goals or economic arrangements, but rather spiritual goals: after all, the revelation received by Muhammad in Mecca did not concern matters of this world, but matters of the spiritual and divine realm."[70] The implication was that Muslims were free to formulate the specific structure of their societies in accordance with Islamic values, to achieve Islamic ends. This was a position also taken by Soekarno in his correspondence with the Persis leader Ahmad Hassan, examined in chapter 2. Wibisono pointed out to his readers that the Qur'an had not one but five injunctions calling on Muslims to alleviate the suffering of the oppressed, leaving no doubt as to the importance of this particular goal.[71]

Wibisono also drew an explicit analogy between enslaved persons of the seventh century and the proletariat of the nineteenth century. According to Wibisono, just as the Qur'an instructed Muslims to alleviate the suffering of the enslaved, Muslims were similarly instructed to alleviate the suffering of the proletariat, who Wibisono believed were the modern counterparts of seventh-century slaves. Wibisono also pointed out that Marx never claimed that the exploitation of the weak only began with the advent of capitalism; the phenomenon already existed in antiquity.[72] The current dynamics of capitalist exploitation, which began in the nineteenth century, made the working class the modern equivalent of the enslaved (*budak-belian*) because it was an extension of the same phenomenon.[73] Here Wibisono was effectively deploying the component of *fiqh* known as *qiyas* (analogical reasoning), in an unstructured and informal way that had more to do with the spirit of Sharia than the letter of Sharia. As will become apparent in this section, this sort of thinking was characteristic of the progressive wing of Masjumi.

maṣlaḥa (public interest or welfare). Most Sunni jurists agree with al-Ghazali that *maqāṣid al-sharī'a* consists of at least five goals, namely the promotion of religion, life, intellect, offspring, and property. Jurists are deeply divided over how to operationalize this legal principle, however. A minority of progressive jurists, including Rashid Rida, have used it as an independent source of law. See Jonathan A. C. Brown, "Maṣlaḥah," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), and Adis Duderija, "Contemporary Muslim Reformist Thought and Maqāṣid cum Maṣlaḥa Approaches to Islamic Law: An Introduction," in *Maqasid al-Shari'a and Contemporary Reformist Muslim Thought: An Examination*, ed. Adis Duderija (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2014).

[70] Wibisono, *Islam dan Sosialisme*, 2:33.
[71] Ibid., 2;22.
[72] Ibid., 2:23.
[73] Ibid.

Perhaps the best way to describe Wibisono's understanding of the relationship between Islam and Marx's ideas would be to invoke the image of "fellow travelers," which is appropriate given the term's specific associations in Marxist circles. In Wibisono's opinion, "The principles that animated Marx and for which he fought all his life were along the same path as outlined by the teachings of Islam" (*menurut pendapat saja, tjita-tjita jang mendorong Marx untuk berdjoang selama hidupnja, adalah sedjalan dengan peladjaran Islam*).[74] He also characterized Marx's ideas as "intersecting" (*bersimpangan*) with Islam's teachings, though he freely admitted that there were clear differences between Islam and Marxism regarding Marx's fundamental worldview (*dasar pemandangan hidoep*), as well as on the new society that Marxists sought to create.[75] In delineating the points of convergence and divergence between Islam and Marxism, Wibisono made a clear distinction between Marxist economic theory and historical materialism. While he accepted Marx's economic analysis of recurrent crises and the extraction of surplus value in capitalism as accurate and useful for Muslims, he rejected historical materialism on the basis that socioeconomic conditions did not constitute the ultimate determinant of humanity's fate—the exercise of free will could be decisive as well.[76] Accepting Marx's analytical concept of surplus value (*nilai-lebih*) and the ensuing struggle between capitalists and workers to extract the maximum amount of surplus value, Wibisono argued that Islam clearly sided with the working class because it opposed exploitation.[77] He cited Sura al-Baqarah, 275—a Qur'anic verse that prohibits *riba* (usury)—to support this argument, on the grounds that the profits extracted through colonial capitalism were clearly exploitative in the same way *riba* was.[78]

[74] Ibid., 2:24.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid., 2:29.
[78] Ibid., 2:25. Interestingly, Wibisono drew on Tjokroaminoto's argument in *Islam dan Sosialisme* (1924) that Islam was fiercely opposed to capitalism. However, he also admitted the possibility of an "Islamic capitalism" that was distinct from "Western capitalism," inextricably tied as the latter was to imperial conquest and racialized colonial domination. What Wibisono seemed to mean by "Islamic capitalism" was the permissibility of capital accumulation as long as it was tempered by care for one's fellow men, but it was clear that he remained implacably opposed to interest-bearing loans and the primacy of the profit motive, both central features of capitalism anywhere. "Islamic capitalism" may thus be a misnomer; it would be more accurate to say that Wibisono was articulating his opposition to a planned economy, collectivized agriculture/industry, and the centralization of administrative authority in the state à la the contemporary USSR or PRC.

This was important for at least two reasons. First, Wibisono was articulating support for some Marxist ideas within an Islamic hermeneutical framework, even though he concluded that Marx's philosophy was, in toto, ultimately incompatible with Islam.[79] Second, he was approaching Marxism not as monolithic political credo, but instead with an appreciation for the usefulness of its analytical frameworks. He did not see any need to accept Marx's historical materialism in order to find its critique of capitalism germane, nor did Marx's atheistic criticisms of religion delegitimize his more useful contributions. This was a form of political Islam that felt free to draw on the lessons the rest of the world had to offer, without needing to defend the "Islamicity" of its adaptations.

This was also an approach to Islam that emphasized its "dynamic" (*dynamische*) and "enterprising" (*giat*) character, explicitly proclaiming Islam's moral duty to support the working class (*kaum buruh*) and calling on the working class to unionize and agitate against employers to defend their rights if necessary.[80] It did not, however, condone class war or the proletariat's seizure of political power. This worldview was articulated in relation to other conciliations of Islam and Marxism, such as Tan Malaka's *Islam dalam Tindjauan Madilog* (1948), which Wibisono admitted had received significant praise from Hamka, and which Wibisono himself seemed to accord a measure of respect.[81] That said, Wibisono did not feel that Tan Malaka had adequately addressed the connection between Madilog and Islam, and emphasized the need for comparative analysis of Marxism and its ideological counterparts from an Islamic standpoint. Both the revolutionary and parliamentary democracy periods fostered an intellectual climate that facilitated Muslim intellectuals' engagement with Marxism. Unlike Tan Malaka's proclamations of compatibility, Muslim politicians like Wibisono, a parliamentarian who twice served as finance minister, found ways of engaging in meaningful dialogue with Marxism on their own, distinctly Islamic, terms. We may critique such attempts for their rigor and consistency, but it is undeniable that Marxism exerted a gravitational pull on Indonesian politics that many Muslim politicians found difficult to ignore.

[79] Ibid., 2:27. By Marx's philosophy, Wibisono meant historical materialism and its exclusion of individual human or divine agency. This was in contrast to Marx's economic theories, which Wibisono clearly found compelling.
[80] Ibid., 2:29.
[81] Ibid., 2:27.

We have already encountered Sjafruddin Prawiranegara (1911–1989), the lawyer turned Masjumi politician, in chapter 3. Serving as finance minister and agriculture minister at various points during the revolution, he achieved national prominence for leading the republic's emergency government during the revolution's darkest days, when Yogyakarta fell to the Dutch and Soekarno and Hatta were captured in December 1948.[82] He also served as trade minister in Natsir's cabinet (September 1950–March 1951) and later as the governor of the Bank of Indonesia from 1951 to 1957.[83] Prawiranegara—like his close friend Natsir—disagreed intensely with Soekarno on both policy and ideology. Soekarno's well-intentioned but disastrous nationalization of Dutch assets and his *konsepsi* of guided democracy prompted Prawiranegara to support the PRRI rebellion, leading to his fall from political grace.[84] Prawiranegara was notable for his steadfast commitment to both Islamic values and democratic institutions and norms.[85] A staunch opponent of the PKI and a critic of both the USSR and PRC, his writings during the parliamentary democracy period nevertheless evinced a significant acquaintance with Marxist ideas, and a perceptible identification with socialist values and goals.

In his foreword to *Islam dalam Pergolakan Dunia* (1950), written during the incipient phase of the Cold War, Prawiranegara waxed lyrical about his deep commitment to a progressive, forward-looking application of Islam in the political realm, and deliberately attacked Islamic conservatism.[86] He stated that the purpose of his book was not to champion the glory of Islam, for that needed no propagandization. Instead, he aimed to force Muslims to confront their narrow-mindedness and their "backwardness" (*kekolotan*) so that the potential of the ummah might be fully realized.[87] By contrast, he uncharitably castigated Buddhism and Hinduism as nondynamic and ill-equipped to provide a moral framework for political evolution: the former for renouncing worldly concerns, and the latter for discriminating on the basis

[82] Mestika Zed, *Somewhere in the Jungle: Pemerintah Darurat Republik Indonesia, Sebuah Mata Rantai Sejarah Yang Terlupakan* (Jakarta: Pustaka Utama Grafiti, 1997).

[83] Audrey R. Kahin, *Islam, Nationalism and Democracy: A Political Biography of Mohammad Natsir* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2012), 59–60.

[84] Ibid., 111.

[85] In May 1980, along with several of his former Masjumi colleagues like Natsir and Kasman Singodimedjo (but also Marxists like S. K. Trimurti), he signed the Petisi 50, a statement of opposition to Suharto's New Order regime. This despite the fact that Suharto had deposed Prawiranegara's nemesis, Soekarno, in 1966.

[86] Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, *Islam Dalam Pergolakan Dunia* (Bandung: Al-Ma'arif, 1950), 49–51.

[87] Ibid., 8.

of caste.[88] Moreover, Prawiranegara identified "Christianism-capitalism" as a specific complex afflicting the world, against which Islam compared favorably because it presented clear moral injunctions that could potentially constrain the impulses of capitalism. He strongly implied that a system of governance built on Islamic principles would be far superior to what the United States and its European allies had to offer.[89] On a Gandhi-esque note, he also argued that Islam was a form of "spiritual power" (*kekuatan rochani*) that could positively influence humanity, even though Muslim nations were politically or militarily marginal.[90] The point he was making was partially the product of the discursive climate of the decolonizing Third World: the moral framework that Islam provided could be incarnated as an equitable political, social, and economic system, one that would avoid the authoritarian Communism of the Second World as well as the exploitative capitalism of the First, and provide a shining example for other societies to emulate.

Prawiranegara made some telling claims in *Islam dalam Pergolakan Dunia*. He argued that Islam constituted a compromise between capitalism and Communism, in the sense that it was as concerned to promote social justice (*keadilan sosial*) as Communism was, but possessed none of the disregard for human suffering that capitalism engendered.[91] According to Prawiranegara, this "humanitarian impulse was not foreign to Islam at all," because "The social justice that is the objective and principle of Marxist ideology also constitutes the guidelines of Islam."[92] Moreover, "Raising the living standards of the poor and oppressed, who suffer from cruelties inflicted by the capitalists, is also one of the principles of Islam."[93] With a nod to the prevailing Third World internationalism and postcolonial solidarity, Prawiranegara even argued that it was the duty of every Muslim to support and help the poor and oppressed everywhere.[94] Islam, like Marxism, admitted the existence of societal classes (unlike capitalism's willful denial of class structures in favor of individual gumption), but differed in that Islam did not condone class war, nor envision the eventual triumph of the proletariat and the creation of a classless utopia.[95] Instead, Islam represented an

[88] Ibid., 12.
[89] Ibid., 12, 24.
[90] Ibid., 10–11.
[91] Ibid., 13.
[92] Ibid. Prawiranegara made no distinction between Marxism, socialism and Communism, using terms like "Marxist socialism" and "Marxist ideology" interchangeably with "Communism."
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid., 13–14.

important alternative to Communism because it promoted a compassionate society built on redistributive economic mechanisms such as zakat and *zakat fitrah*.[96] Nevertheless, he admitted that the resonances were such that Muslims were deeply attracted to Marxism, with many joining Communist groups during the revolution.[97] He recalled that "in our struggle against Dutch imperialism and colonialism, Muslims and Communists fought as comrades, even as a single bloc, without concern for who was a doctrinaire Communist, or who was a pious Muslim."[98]

What emerges clearly from his line of reasoning is that while Prawiranegara was not attempting to reconcile Islam and Marxism, Marxist ideas had percolated through Indonesian political discourse over decades, and deeply informed Indonesian Islam in its social, political, and economic aspects. Prawiranegara strongly emphasized Islam's egalitarian ethos and understood the pursuit of social justice as essential to Islam. He saw Islam as fundamentally superior to Marxism, delivering better and more realistic results on their shared objectives. One chapter of the book was devoted to critiquing Marxism: Prawiranegara disdained its disregard for human individuality (*individualiteit manusia*) in favor of class struggle, its "quixotic" (*donquichotterie*) dream of a classless future, its inculcation of hatred between social groups, and historical materialism's excessive reliance on the human pursuit of utilitarian self-interest instead of emphasizing commitment to ethical ideals or legal norms.

For all of Marxism's many failings in Prawiranegara's eyes, it shared many of Islam's ethical concerns in ways that capitalism did not. His most scathing criticism was reserved for capitalism, attacking Keynesian economics and what he called the "neocapitalism" of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal and Clement Attlee's postwar Labour government.[99] He argued that social spending was a core component of Marxist ideology as well as Islamic ethics, but was not integral to capitalism at all; investment in education, housing, and public amenities were a means to an end, not a constitutive feature of capitalist economies.[100] Capitalism's regard for the less fortunate, when it existed, was couched in the Catholic logic of "charity" rather than the logic of "human rights," which Prawiranegara found unacceptable.[101] He was

[96] Ibid., 14.
[97] Ibid., 13.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid., 28.
[100] Ibid., 31–32.
[101] Ibid., 32.

consistent in these convictions. In 1971, with Suharto's regime firmly in power, Prawiranegara would still assert that "Marxism's virtue lay in its hatred of capitalism, and its willingness to work and sacrifice to destroy capitalism."[102] Prawiranegara's triumphalist approach to Islam, what we might even characterize as Islamic exceptionalism, was optimistic in the extreme, but it did evince a high degree of clarity in its critiques of Communism and capitalism. His writings show the degree to which Marxist ideas exerted a leftward pull on mainstream Islamic discourse, a drift that was remarkably consistent across the upper echelons of Masjumi leadership during the parliamentary democracy period.

Pious Communists in the PKI

Although the political possibilities for explicit Islamic Communism had been largely circumscribed since the 1926–27 uprisings, some Muslims continued to find an outlet for the expression of their moral convictions in the PKI. They did not achieve the kind of prominence that Haji Misbach had in Surakarta or Kyai Haji Tubagus Ahmad Chatib had in Banten, as regional leaders with disciples and militant followings, nor did they serve as parliamentarians and ministers. Instead, they represented ordinary PKI supporters who found various ways of reconciling their faith with their political commitments. The two examined here were only tip of the iceberg, for many pious Communists did not leave written records of their political beliefs. Such views were transgressive in the extreme after the 1965–66 massacres, and it was not until the fall of Suharto's New Order regime that pious Communists' autobiographies began to be published. This section will examine the speeches of Kyai Haji Achmad Dasuki Siradj (b. 1908) and the autobiography of Hasan Raid (1923–2010), both of whom justified their PKI membership in distinctly Islamic terms.

The more prominent of the two was Kyai Haji Achmad Dasuki Siradj, who served a PKI representative to the Constitutional Assembly, the body charged with drafting and debating a new permanent constitution to replace the provisional constitution of 1950. The titles "Kyai" and "Haji" were honorifics granted to Muslims who had completed their Islamic education under a master at a traditional Javanese Islamic school (*pesantren*), and who had

[102] Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, *Agama Dan Ideologi Dalam Pembagunan Ekonomi Dan Bangsa* (Djakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1971), 9.

made the pilgrimage to Mecca. These markers of Islamic piety were retained by Siradj in his official Constitutional Assembly profile, and his speeches in the assembly were inflected with Islamic greetings and benedictions, as well as quotations from the Qur'an in their original Arabic.[103] Siradj was born in Surakarta in 1903, the city where Haji Misbach's influence was strongest, coming of age amid the Islamic Communist labor agitation and radical publishing that flourished during the early 1920s. Educated in the local Sekolah Rakjat (people's school, set up by the PKI affiliate Sarekat Rakjat), Siradj went on to study at the Djamsaron *pesantren*, the Kasingan Rembang *pesantren*, and also at the Madrasah Mambaul Ulum.[104] In 1918, he had been one of the founders of a debating club—much like Sumatra Thawalib's International Debating Club—called Idzharuichaq (lit. clarifying the truth). He also became an active organizer in a Marxist-influenced *tabligh* organization active in rural areas, the Mu'alimin movement.[105] From 1919 to 1926, he joined the editorial staff of *Mingguan*, a newspaper edited by the famed pergerakan activist Dr. Tjipto Mangunkusomo. At the same time, he joined the staff of Haji Misbach's newspapers, *Islam Bergerak* and *Medan Moeslimin*.[106] The articles Siradj published in *Islam Bergerak* and *Medan Moeslimin* ran afoul of *persdelict*, and he was imprisoned for six months in the early 1920s. Siradj joined the PKI in 1924, teaching at a number of *pesantren* in the Surakarta region, while also being employed as a Sarekat Rakyat organizer and a leader in the PKI-sponsored scouting movement, the Internationale Pavinder Organisatie (IPO). Like the *Medan Moeslimin* journalist Haroenrasjid, Siradj was a close associate of Haji Misbach's, and both men were eventually interned for several years on Boven Digoel.[107]

In a famous incident that made the news as far away as Singapore, Siradj was involved in organizing a demonstration, purportedly thirty thousand strong, outside the Great Mosque of Surakarta after Friday prayers on February 19, 1926.[108] The protest was organized in defiance of the ban

[103] "K.H. Achmad Dasuki Siradj," in *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Dalam Konstitutante*, vol. 2 (Bandung: Kementerian Penerangan, 1958), 326–36.

[104] "Achmad Dasuki Siradj," Benedict Anderson Papers, #14-27-4189. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. The Sarekat Rakjat was A subsidiary organization of the PKI; see chapter 1 for more details.

[105] *Tabligh* refers to Islamic gatherings with the aim of spreading the message of Islam and promoting piety through scripture reading, discussion, *dhikr*, and other practices. On the Mu'alimin movement, see McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 171; Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 321.

[106] "Achmad Dasuki Siradj," Benedict Anderson Papers, #14-27-4189. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. 26, 73–74.

[107] Takashi Shiraishi, *Hantu Digul* (Jakarta: LKiS, 2001), 26; Djohan Effendi, *Pembaruan Tanpa Membongkar Tradisi* (Jakarta: Kompas, 2010), 73–74.

[108] Xie, "The Netherlands East Indies 1926 Communist Revolt Revisited."

on public gatherings imposed by the colonial authorities in anticipation of intensified PKI activity, activity that would eventually lead to the 1926–27 uprisings. Siradj was arrested for his troubles, and eventually exiled to Digoel in 1927, so he did not participate in the uprisings that broke out in late 1926. He spent several years in Digoel associating with other exiled Communists and was released relatively early in 1933. This marked him as a "cooperative" prisoner who was willing to work for a small salary, unlike "uncooperatives" such as Hatta and Sjahrir. Apparently, his cooperation and early release did not signify his renunciation of Communism, for he was active in the underground PKI that Musso organized from 1935 to 1945; he was even detained from two months in 1943 by the Japanese Kempetai on suspicion of Communist activity.[109] During the revolution, he served as a member of Surakarta's KNI, and he organized guerilla resistance to the Dutch during and after Operation Kraai, as leader of the Gerakan Republik Indonesia militia. Arrested by the Dutch in April 1949, he rejoined the Sarekat Rakyat and the PKI after independence, also becoming a member of the PKI's secretariat in Surakarta before serving in the Constitutional Assembly.[110] His career trajectory clearly attests to his place within the "lineage" of Haji Misbach's Islamic Communism: unlike Sajuti Melik, Siradj never saw the need to abandon the PKI. Instead, he continued to see it as the best means to achieve Islamic goals.

In the heated Constitutional Assembly debates on whether to give Islam a special place in the constitution, Siradj made an impassioned speech justifying his PKI membership, and why he believed Islam ought not to be the official state religion. Siradj's fundamental argument was that while the PKI respected all religions, the adoption of Islam as the state religion was simply impractical; it would cause chaos (*hantjur benrantakan*) because non-Muslims would feel betrayed.[111] Speaking after Mohammad Natsir, Kasman Singodimedjo and Zainal Abidin Ahmad of Masjumi had accused the PKI of disloyalty to the republic and intolerance toward Islam, Siradj was understandably defensive. He delivered a fierce rebuttal of Natsir's arguments, qualifying Natsir's quotations from the Qur'an by providing additional context to the verses Natsir cited.[112] Siradj contended that Natsir's arguments

[109] "Achmad Dasuki Siradj," Benedict Anderson Papers, #14-27-4189. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.
[110] Ibid.
[111] "K.H. Achmad Dasuki Siradj," in *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia dalam Konstitutante*, 2:330.
[112] Ibid., 2:326–28.

about the Qur'an allowing Muslims to protect themselves against their aggressors (by which Natsir meant the PKI) were inappropriate, because it was not the PKI but Kartosuwiryo's Darul Islam rebels who had burned mosques and killed Muslim congregants at prayer.[113]

In doing so, Siradj signaled that a Communist like himself was no less steeped in Islamic knowledge than Masjumi leaders were. He implied that there was more than one way for Islamic piety to be expressed politically, and forcefully rebutted claims that the PKI was "anti-God," or that it sought to "destroy places of worship and limit freedom of religion."[114] Siradj pointed out that Darul Islam would likely benefit from an amnesty if the sympathetic Masjumi had their way, and would therefore never face justice for the atrocities they had already committed.[115] He openly challenged Natsir, arguing that if Natsir's interpretation of the Qur'an was correct and the PKI ought to be disbanded, the same applied to Darul Islam and its military wing, the Tentara Islam Indonesia (TII, Islamic Army of Indonesia).[116]

Siradj also pointed out that the revolution's success had not been due to the efforts of one party alone, but of many: "the Communists and the Muslims, the nobility and the illiterate masses" had all contributed toward making independence a reality.[117] Therefore, the government represented all these diverse groups, and ought not to be perceived as prioritizing the interests of Muslims over others by making Islam the official state religion. Much like Masjumi's Wibisono, Siradj argued that Pancasila was eminently compatible with Islam: he contended that Pancasila was a good example of an Islamic mode of governance inspired by Islamic values and designed by Muslims, within which genuine differences could be accommodated.[118] Attacking Natsir's claim that Pancasila was an unhappy compromise to promote unity amid the chaos of revolution, Siradj questioned how the Qur'an, which championed the principle of *tauhid* (unity),[119] could possibly be "a

[113] Ibid., 2:329.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid., 2:330. This was not an unreasonable accusation. As Siradj acidly noted, Masjumi members like Isa Anshary were highly sympathetic to Darul Islam's insurgency, while Natsir himself had made strenuous efforts to reach a negotiated solution to the conflict when he served as prime minister from September 1950 to March 1951. See Kahin, *Islam, Nationalism and Democracy*, 76–77; Formichi, *Islam and the Making of the Nation*, 162, 192, 201.
[116] "K.H. Achmad Dasuki Siradj," *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia dalam Konstitutante*, 2:329.
[117] Ibid., 2:332.
[118] Ibid., 2:332, 334.
[119] *Tauhid* is a loaded concept in Islam, usually referring to the theological concept of God's unity of being in a monotheistic sense. This stood in contrast to Sufi mysticism (some branches of which believed God to be manifest in his creation), the Christian triune Godhead or Hindu polytheism.

priori opposed to the Pancasila principle of *Ketuhanan jang Maha Esa*?"[120] *Ketuhanan jang Maha Esa*, after all, was a monotheist confession of faith, acknowledging only one God; it also had the social effect of uniting a heterogeneous Indonesia under a religious principle acceptable to most citizens. To Siradj, Pancasila was an incarnation of Islamic values in the political realm.

Siradj proudly stated that he had been a PKI member for thirty-three years and saw his membership as a matter of "political practicality": he was a PKI member because PKI policies best advanced Muslims' interests, "in accordance with God's injunctions."[121] This position evinced a high degree of continuity with Haji Misbach's belief that Communism constituted the best vehicle for achieving Islamic goals. Siradj's emphasis on "political practicality" also echoed the position adopted by Tan Malaka: Communists were free to choose which religion they embraced, and Indonesians were free to wear as many hats as they wished. Quoting Sura an-Nisa, 75, in both Arabic and Indonesian, Siradj asked his colleagues: "What is the matter with you, that you do not fight for Allah's cause, for the oppressed men, women, and children who say, 'O Lord, remove us from our place of oppression and appoint for us a protector and helper?' "[122] This was the thrust of Siradj's argument: if the Qur'an enjoined Muslims to fight injustice, they ought to seek the most effective path to do so. If that path involved joining the PKI, then so be it. In what must have been an infuriating turn of phrase to his Masjumi colleagues, Siradj ended his speech by proclaiming that the PKI "was the only party dedicated to practicing God's laws [*mengamalkan hukum Allah*] in their political form," so if Masjumi delegates would like to "implement God's laws sincerely," they were "invited to join the PKI."[123]

Outside of state institutions, PKI members with no special standing also defended their amalgamation of Muslim faith and Communist politics. Hasan Raid's memoir, *Pergulatan Muslim Komunis* (Struggles of a Muslim Communist, 2001), presents a moving account of his deep beliefs and the

Muhammad Abduh and Sayyid Qutb interpreted Tauhid to mean that the principle of unity ought to be manifest in human affairs, "whereby society is to reflect divine unity through unanimous submission to God's revealed will, both privately and publicly." This guiding principle of unity is what Siradj was invoking to defend Pancasila. See "Tawhid," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 317–18.

[120] "K.H. Achmad Dasuki Siradj," *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia dalam Konstitutante*, 2:334.
[121] Ibid., 2:336.
[122] Ibid., 2:331.
[123] Ibid., 2:336.

costs they incurred. Written sometime in the early to mid-1990s (the memoir ends in 1993, when Raid turned seventy), it was not published until 2001, after the fall of Suharto's regime. Born in 1923, Raid was a Minangkabau native of Silungkang, West Sumatra, a PKI stronghold in the 1920s that became one of the flashpoints of the 1926–27 uprisings.[124] Educated in the Dutch-medium government primary school in Silungkang, Raid also received an Islamic education from a young age at the Surau Tanjong Medan under Pokiah Yakub.[125] During this period, he studied the Qur'an (which he memorized by the age of ten) and read books of the Western literary canon, such as Alexandre Dumas's *The Count of Monte Cristo*, as well as pergerakan literature like Abdoel Moeis's *Salah Asuhan*.[126] As chapter 2 has argued, this was an environment that was particularly friendly to the simultaneous cultivation of Islamic identity and Marxist ideas in the pergerakan consciousness, and Raid's convictions reflect that environment.

One of the recurring tropes in Raid's memoir was his interpretation of Sura al-An'nam, 145, which contains an injunction against the drinking of flowing blood. The verse, in its totality, forbids the consumption of the flesh or blood of an already-dead animal, of pigs, or an animal slaughtered in dedication to another God, unless absolutely necessary for survival.[127] Raid, however, recalled that his teacher, Pokiah Yacub, interpreted the verse metaphorically. The drinking of flowing blood or the consumption of prohibited animals' flesh was likened by Pokiah to a slaveowner's exploitation of slave labor, for that labor was the product of the blood flowing through a body.[128] Raid subscribed to this metaphor, explaining that the "blood-sucking" (*penghisapan*) of the poor by the rich was the principal cause of poverty, and society had to be structured in such a way as to severely limit such exploitation except when utterly necessary, much as the Qur'anic verse assured Muslims of God's mercy if they consumed the flesh or blood of such animals to survive.[129] Syllogistically, the "consumption" of labor, or what in Marxist terms would be called the theft of laborers' surplus value, was something that ought to be structurally limited according to Pokiah and Raid's interpretation

[124] Hasan Raid, *Pergulatan Muslim Komunis: Otobiografi Hasan Raid* (Yogyakarta: LKPSM, 2001), 16.
[125] Ibid., 26.
[126] Ibid., 25.
[127] *The Noble Qur'an*, ed. and trans. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Madinah: King Fahd Glorious Qur'an Printing Complex, 2012), 193–94.
[128] Raid, *Pergulatan Muslim Komunis*, 6.
[129] Ibid.

of the Qur'an. Raid's commitment to the PKI hinged upon this belief, because he felt the PKI the only party that was serious about structuring society to limit "blood-sucking."

Raid also deployed a particular narrative of his education and his journey toward political awareness to convince his readers of his logical, gradual progress toward the conviction that Communism was a corollary of his Islamic faith. Raid wrote of being inspired by PKI and Sarekat Rakyat members who staged an uprising in Silungkang in 1927, an area in which sharecropping was widespread and informal debt-slavery was an unacknowledged institution. He also wrote of being inspired by the Islamic socialist Permi activists of the 1930s, such as Rasuna Said and Rasimah Ismail, who were imprisoned in 1933 for their fiery speeches.[130] In 1936, he moved to Surabaya, East Java, to complete his education; there he became an avid reader of the pergerakan press, faithfully following the writings of Soekarno, Hatta, and Sjahrir. He recalled reading Soekarno's *Nationalism, Islam and Marxism* (1926) in particular, and though attracted to it, he knew little about Marxism at the time.[131] Returning to Silungkang in 1940, he laid low during the Japanese occupation and experienced his first direct contact with PKI literature in November 1945, when he read the very first issue of the postwar PKI journal, *Bintang Merah*.[132] However, the pull of his Islamic faith was always clear: like Achmadi Moestahal, Raid joined Masjumi's armed wing, Hizbullah, when the revolution first began in August 1945. He saw action around Semarang during the early clashes with British and Japanese troops.[133] Raid recalled being electrified by the PKI's program as laid out in *Bintang Merah*, writing that the PKI was committed to "an end to the blood-sucking of people by people, and the promotion of justice in all aspects of life."[134] This reminded him of the courage displayed by the participants in the 1926–27 uprisings, as well as the ideals of an equitable and dignified society cherished by Soekarno, Hatta, and Sjahrir; he immediately decided in his heart that he would join the PKI instead of Masjumi.[135] He joined the PKI in late 1945, and was put to work editing *Bintang Merah* alongside D. N. Aidit and Persis Pardede.

As a condition for becoming a PKI member, Raid was required to undergo several courses, in which he learned about historical materialism and

[130] Ibid., 20–23.
[131] Ibid., 68.
[132] Ibid., 65–66.
[133] Ibid., 62, 65.
[134] Ibid., 65.
[135] Ibid., 66.

the nature of state administration, but he perceived no conflict between his Islamic faith and historical materialism.[136] At one point, he even penned an article in *Bintang Merah* that attacked Tan Malaka for being insufficiently grounded in historical and dialectical materialism.[137] Raid named the PKI veteran Alimin, a fellow Muslim, as his role model because of Alimin's independent thinking, keen grasp of Marxist theory, and rejection of pomp and ceremony. Raid particularly admired the fact that Alimin chose to live as simple a life as possible, the way a good Muslim would.[138] Alimin, like the characters of Semaun's *Hikayat Kadirun* examined in chapter 1, exemplified a particular articulation of Muslim piety: whether the motive force in world history was economic or spiritual was not a sticking point, because it was just action that mattered. Communists like Raid were more concerned that Islamic priorities such as the creation of a just society would manifest themselves in political efforts to improve society.

An incident that occurred during his time as a journalist at *Bintang Merah* vividly illustrates his understanding of Islam's relationship with Communism. Raid recalled a long conversation he once had with Haji Datuk Batuah, the Minangkabau Islamic Communist and Sumatra Thawalib teacher examined in chapter 1, contriving to invent the dialogue of this exchange (although he was clear the conversation was not verbatim).[139] Haji Datuk Batuah had been testing Raid on whether he understood both Islam and Communism well enough for him to deliver a radio lecture titled "The PKI and Religion." Haji Datuk Batuah explicitly asked Raid how he would defend the PKI's program of ending oppression from accusations that it was incompatible with Islam. Returning to his favorite Qur'anic verse, Sura al-An'nam, 145, Raid replied that the Qur'an "forbade the drinking of flowing blood," which symbolized how Muslims ought not to participate in the exploitation of others. Haji Datuk Batuah then asked how Raid would defend himself against accusations of "subjectivity," especially since many Muslims would find his "unwillingness to defend harmony and peace" (viz., seek a nonconfrontational solution to problems) unpalatable. In response, Raid

[136] Ibid., 66–69.

[137] Ibid., 73. Specifically, Raid's grouse was with Tan Malaka's argument, elaborated in the PARI Manifesto of 1945, that the coalescence of nations into larger blocs would serve as a deterrent to future conflict. Raid disagreed and felt that this "did not reflect the historical and dialectical materialist way of thinking."

[138] Ibid.; C. W. Watson, *Of Self and Injustice* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2006), 43.

[139] Raid, *Pergulatan Muslim Komunis*, 76–82. This was clearly an episode of some importance to Raid, important enough for him to "recreate" the dialogue to dramatize it.

conceded that his defense of Communism was indeed subjective, but all political positions were fundamentally subjective. The capitalists who benefited from the status quo were on equally subjective ground: they would naturally claim that their worldview, which normalized exploitation, was realistic, reasonable, and objective.[140]

Haji Datuk Batuah responded favorably, pointing out that it was easy to assume a position of seeming neutrality in the face of an unjust status quo, but maintaining the appearance of being nonpartisan effectively perpetuated injustice.[141] Raid enthusiastically agreed, quoting Sura al-Qasas, 5–6, which concerns Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt. The Israelites are described as the beneficiaries of God's desire to grant "favor to those who were weak and oppressed in the land, to make them rulers and to make them inheritors."[142] By the same token, Raid argued, God was on the side of the Indonesian *rakyat*, the long-suffering masses whose labor had been exploited under colonial capitalism, and who had yet to see meaningful improvements to their quality of life.[143] Raid also cited Sura ar-Rad, 11, to justify committing oneself to fighting socioeconomic injustice: "Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves."[144]

More conservative interpretations of these verses usually take it to mean that the "good condition" of a people will not be altered unless they have sinned.[145] Raid's interpretation of these verses was generous, squaring them with the broad moral injunctions of the Qur'an—which he induced from the importance of zakat—to justify upending the status quo to improve the living conditions of the poor and oppressed (*kaum mustakbirin*).[146] In connection with this, Raid argued that Indonesian society could only be considered just by Islamic standards if Islamic scholars would encourage the oppressed to organize so as to put an end to their oppression. He argued that Indonesian society would only be just when the state devised a modern equivalent of the *Bayt al-Mal*, a public treasury that would be used to guarantee a minimum standard of living for the poor, beyond the obligations of zakat or individual charity, because "good intentions would not resolve the roots of poverty."[147]

[140] Ibid., 76–77.
[141] Ibid., 77.
[142] *The Noble Qur'an*, 517.
[143] Raid, *Pergulatan Muslim Komunis*, 78.
[144] Ibid.
[145] *The Noble Qur'an*, 321.
[146] Raid, *Pergulatan Muslim Komunis*, 78.
[147] Ibid. The *Bayt al-Mal* (lit. house of wealth) was the public treasury of the Rashidun caliphs, which was also responsible for the collection of zakat and its expenditure. See "Bayt al-Mal," in *The*

Haji Datuk Batuah was impressed by Raid's arguments, approvingly stating that the PKI would "fly high the banner of freedom of oppression . . . our PKI will implement the teachings of Islam regarding the liberation of the people [*PKI kita amalkan ajaran Islam tentang pembebasan umat*]."[148] With that, Haji Datuk Batuah approved Raid's radio lecture.

The radio lecture itself was relatively straightforward: Raid asserted that the PKI welcomed support from all faith communities if they supported the PKI's program of resistance to oppression, because religion was a private matter outside the ambit of the PKI. The PKI believed that the exploitation of the poor and oppressed in would continue unless they actively took matters into their own hands, militating for their own interests. Islam forbade the exploitation of man by his fellow man, as elaborated in Sura al-Baqarah, 188, and Sura al-Humazah, 1–3.[149] Finally, echoing Siradj's speech in the Constitutional Assembly, Raid argued that the PKI's goal of a socialist society was desirable from a Muslim point of view because it was the first step toward a classless society, which was in turn an expression of the Islamic principle of *Tauhid*.[150] This "unified society" (*masyarakat Tauhidi*) was "truly in accordance with Islamic teachings to support truth and justice in all matters, eliminating the exploitation of man by his fellow man."[151] In fact, that entire section of the memoir, consisting of several chapters, was titled "Panggilan Hidup untuk Masyarakat Tauhidi," the call to build a society embodying *tauhid*. Raid's emphasis on the Islamic notion of *tauhid*, which was clearly important to Siradj as well, indicates how deeply Islamic faith and Marxist ideas could be imbricated during this intellectually febrile period. PKI members like Raid and Siradj understood Communism as an efficient vehicle for achieving Islamic ends.

The prominence of Islam in Raid's worldview was consistent throughout the parliamentary democracy period. In the early 1950s, Raid left *Bintang Merah* to work as a full-time organizer for the national-level Indonesian Plantation Workers Union (SABUPRI, Sarekat Buruh Perkebunan Republik

Oxford Dictionary of Islam, ed. John L. Esposito. Oxford Islamic Studies Online, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e324 (accessed November 6, 2019).

[148] Raid, *Pergulatan Muslim Komunis*, 79.

[149] The verses read as follows: "And eat up not one another's property unjustly, nor give bribery to the rulers that you may knowingly eat up a part of the property of others sinfully"; "Woe to every slanderer and backbiter. Who has gathered wealth and counted it. He thinks that his wealth will make him last forever! Nay! Verily, he will be thrown in the crushing fire." See *The Noble Qur'an*, 39, 853.

[150] Raid, *Pergulatan Muslim Komunis*, 82.

[151] Ibid.

Indonesia), an affiliate of the umbrella labor union controlled by the PKI, the Central All-Indonesian Workers Organization (SOBSI, Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia). While a full-time unionist, Raid had to manage controversies over whether Muslims could join SABUPRI, because of its relationship with the PKI-dominated SOBSI, on the presumption that the PKI condemned religion. He recalled a series of articles debating the compatibility of SABUPRI and Islam being published in the main SABUPRI magazine, *Warta Sabupri*. Raid contributed an article rebutting the accusation that the PKI was antireligion, pointing out that this was terribly convenient for plantation owners (often Dutch concerns, especially in the Deli tobacco plantation belt in Sumatra), who were always looking for opportunities to undermine unions. He invoked Sura Ar-Rad, 11, once again, arguing that the Qur'an called on Muslims to work to change their own circumstances, which dovetailed neatly with SABUPRI's raison d'être.[152] This argument must have had some appeal, since SABUPRI's membership reached approximately seven hundred thousand in 1952, making it the single largest Indonesian labor union of the parliamentary democracy period.[153]

Raid also recalled rebutting Masjumi accusations that the PKI was antireligion while campaigning in the lead-up to the 1955 elections. Raid often deployed this rhetorical defense at village speeches: "In what way is the PKI antireligion for wanting to rescue the people [*umat*] from poverty? For opposing the oppression of one's fellow man? For condemning drinking the flowing blood of one's fellow man? Why is the PKI antireligion for upholding justice in society?"[154] By contrast, he claimed that Masjumi was far too cozy with plantation owners and business interests, discreetly acquiescing to the bulldozing of squatter settlements on fertile land, a common occurrence in this period because the economic disruption of the revolution had forced many to turn to subsistence agriculture on plantation land. Raid pointed out that the occupants of these squatter settlements were the very same orphans and paupers (*anak yatim* and *fakir miskin*, both specific categories in *fiqh*) that the Qur'an compelled Muslims to protect. He went on invoke Sura al-Ma'un, 1–7, which condemns those who pray intensely but ignore the needs of the poor and the orphans. The verse reads: "Have you seen the one who denies recompense? For that is the one who drives away the orphan, and does not

[152] Ibid., 125–26.
[153] Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870–1979*, 115; Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia*, xvi.
[154] Raid, *Pergulatan Muslim Komunis*, 133.

encourage the feeding of the poor. So woe to those who pray, [but] who are heedless of their prayer, those who make show [of their deeds], and withhold small kindnesses."[155] Raid also condemned the tendency among Masjumi supporters to denounce PKI members as *kafir* (infidels), accusing them of stoking *fitnah* (civil strife), something that the Qur'an explicitly forbade. Quoting Sura al-Hujarat, 1, Raid argued that such declamations constituted an usurpation of God's exclusive right to pass judgment on humans.[156] By critiquing Masjumi within a specifically Islamic framework, Raid asserted the PKI's status as the true executor of Islamic values in Indonesian society.

The Many Flavors of Indonesian Marxism

Not all whose worldviews mixed Islam with Marxism were supporters of the PKI. Marxism found many forms of expression in Indonesian political life, most notably among PSI supporters, but also in the left wing of the PNI and Masjumi. Beyond these major players were numerous smaller parties that synthesized Marxist ideas or operated on explicitly Marxist platforms adapted for the Indonesian stage. Partai Murba (Murba Party), Angkatan Comunis Muda (Acoma, Generation of Communist Youth), and Partai Buruh (Labor Party) were merely three examples, and all held parliamentary seats throughout the parliamentary democracy period.[157]

Outside of political parties, there were many civil society actors who evinced an admixture of Islam and Marxism. This section examines a variety of Indonesians who did not count themselves as PKI supporters—indeed, many of them were staunch opponents of the PKI—who managed to find their own ways of squaring their Muslim identities with their Marx-inspired politics. Bahtiar Effendy rightly pointed out that plenty of Islamic political discourse was not expressed through political parties.[158] Outside of parties like Masjumi, NU, and PSII, there were many articulations of Islamic political discourse: individuals such as Hatta and Trimurti and organizations like

[155] *The Noble Qur'an*, 855.

[156] Raid, *Pergulatan Muslim Komunis*, 134.

[157] The Partai Buruh (Labor Party) was a splinter faction of the Partai Buruh Indonesia (Indonesian Labor Party), which had voluntarily merged with the PKI in December 1949. The dissident Partai Buruh rejected the merger and obtained seven seats in the provisional parliament that served as the republic's legislature from 1950 to 1955; it only won two parliamentary seats in the 1955 elections. See Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, 144.

[158] Bahtiar Effendy, "Islam and the State: The Transformation of Islamic Political Ideas and Practices in Indonesia," (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 1995), 54, 75.

Muhammadiyah and Persis developed their own variants of what Shaheb Ahmed or Saba Mahmood would recognize as Islamic discourse. Islam is polyvocal and can be interpreted in many ways; different actors had different ideas about how Islam ought to be woven into the fabric of the republic. The fact that they were not members of an "Islamic party" did not make their ideas any less Islamic. This section therefore examines the experiences of Muslim women in the Marxist women's organization Gerwani; the speeches and recollections of Soedjatmoko and Djoeir Moehamad, Muslims who were members of the PSI's upper echelons; and the speeches given by various representatives of minor Marxist parties in the Constitutional Assembly. It will end with a brief consideration of the PKI's public rhetoric on Islam in Aidit's speeches and writings, showing the remarkable degree of consistency across the Indonesian Left when it came to engaging Islam.

For some, Marxist ideas were tools, albeit important ones, in a larger toolkit. S. K. Trimurti, whose revolutionary writings we have already examined in chapter 3, was one such critical Marxist. Deeply committed to the labor movement and feminist activism, she was familiar with Marxist theory but never joined the PKI and remained a lifelong Muslim. In 1957, Trimurti penned a short but robust defense of Tan Malaka and the minor Marxist parties that continued his intellectual legacy, such as Acoma and the Partai Murba. In it, she asserted that Tan Malaka was both an honest intellectual and a visionary, a true Communist who valued Indonesia's needs more than ideological purity.[159] His only failing, Trimurti mused, was that he never addressed women's issues. Trimurti called on labor unions to support Tan Malaka's heirs, much as they had supported the PP during the revolution.[160] This was written in 1957, an inopportune time to be a Tan Malaka loyalist: the PKI was at the height of its political influence, having performed well in both the 1955 general elections and the 1957 regional elections. There was no love lost between the PKI and Tan Malaka; the official party line was that Tan Malaka had been misguided at best and a traitor at worst for splitting the PKI's support base.

Trimurti's commitment to labor unionism and her sympathy for Tan Malaka's brand of Communism were framed within an Islamic worldview. Chapter 3 has already shown Trimurti's religiosity in the face of impending

[159] S. K. Trimurti, "Tan Malaka Seorang Jujur," in *95 Tahun S.K. Trimurti Pejuang Indonesia: Kumpulan Tulisan Terpilih Karya S.K. Trimurti (1939–1991)*, ed. B. E. Henky and Teguh Mangil (Jakarta: Yayasan Bung Karno, 2007), 108.

[160] Ibid.

incarceration for *persdelict*. The importance of her Muslim faith would be evident later in life as well, when she wrote articles for a left-leaning magazine titled *Gema Angkatan 45* (Echo of the 1945 Generation). In it, she argued that humanity's economic activities were an expression of not just humans' physical needs, but also of their spiritual (*roh*, *spirituil*) needs.[161] The advancement of economic interests at the expense of mental or spiritual interests was therefore not acceptable to her; economic progress could not be the epitome of human priorities. Instead, she argued that "the feeling of justice" (*rasa keadilan*) was the higher purpose; people had a deep desire to live in a just society, "in accordance with their mental, spiritual, religious, moral and ethical values."[162] She asserted the universality of humanity's dignity, regardless of race, religion, and gender, arguing that "God has constituted his creations as a single unit," so an injury against one was an injury against all.[163] It was within this distinctly religious framework that she made her argument for broad and expansive labor rights, acknowledging the cost this might impose on economic growth but accepting that cost as the price of respecting human dignity.[164]

Trimurti was not the only female activist driven by both Muslim piety and Marxist ideas. Working in civil society rather than through political parties, female activists are largely absent from the scholarship on this period outside of monographs that focus explicitly on women's organizations and struggles.[165] Gerwis (Gerakan Wanita Indonesia, Indonesian Women's Movement) was founded in Semarang in 1950, and changed its name to Gerwani (Gerakan Wanita Sedar Indonesia, Movement of Conscious Indonesian Women) in 1954 when it moved toward becoming a mass organization. With only 500 members in 1950, it expanded remarkably quickly, claiming up to 1.5 million members in 1963 and 3 million in 1965 (see Figure 4.1).[166] Influenced by Marxist theory since its inception, it became

[161] S. K. Trimurti, "Pemeratan Pendapatan Arah Yang Kita Tuju," in *95 Tahun S.K. Trimurti Pejuang Indonesia: Kumpulan Tulisan Terpilih Karya S.K. Trimurti (1939–1991)*, ed. B. E. Henky and Teguh Mangil (Jakarta: Yayasan Bung Karno, 2007), 204.

[162] Ibid.

[163] Ibid., 205.

[164] Ibid., 206.

[165] There are a number of excellent monographs on women's movements and struggles during the 1950s, including Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia* (2002), Martyn, *The Women's Movement in Post-colonial Indonesia* (2005), and Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia* (2004).

[166] Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia*, 208; Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, 140, 179.

increasingly close to the PKI as the 1950s wore on, eventually inducing founding members like S. K. Trimurti to quit.[167]

Gerwani's relationship with Islamic organizations had long been strained because of Gerwani's unwillingness to engage with Islam at a hermeneutic level, or to make common cause with Islamic organizations at an institutional level.[168] This recalcitrance was in large part the result of Gerwani's focus on criticizing "backward" marriage customs and promoting legal reform in personal status law to benefit women. These fraught issues, especially polygyny, had been a source of contention since the 1930s, and they continued to divide Indonesian feminists. Muslim women's organizations, though progressive in many ways, tended to perceive Gerwani's critiques as an insult to Islam itself, foreclosing the possibility of cooperation. Gerwani, on its part, made no strenuous efforts to bridge that gap between intention and perception.[169]

However, at the individual level, there were several prominent Gerwani supporters who continued to combine their Islamic piety with their women's rights activism. Such individuals may have been influenced by the discursive climate of the 1950s, in which nonaligned, pan-Asian solidarity was deeply popular, as expressed in international women's conferences like the Conference on the Women of Asia in Beijing (1949), the Asian-African Conference of Women in Colombo (1958), and the Afro-Asian Women's Conference (1961).[170] Despite the participation of many Marxist women's organizations, these conferences were largely independent and multidenominational; many Indonesian women's organizations were represented at them, and they fostered an ecumenical spirit of undogmatic female solidarity across national boundaries.[171] This historical moment of transnational Afro-Asian solidarity may have motivated Indonesian feminists to bridge domestic divides and cooperate where they could despite their differences. S. Yati, whom we have already encountered in chapter 2, was an influential member of the PSII's women's wing even before her marriage. Her position within the PSII allowed her lend the PSII's support to Gerwani during the 1950s, so female PSII members were able to join Gerwani activists and female members of SOBSI on several occasions to

[167] Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia*, 181.
[168] Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, 250.
[169] Ibid., 251.
[170] Elisabeth Armstrong, "Before Bandung: The Anti-imperialist Women's Movement in Asia and the Women's International Democratic Federation," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 41 (2015): 305–31.
[171] Stolte, "The People's Bandung," 142–43.

hold public demonstrations against issues like unequal pay for women and women's rights in the workplace. S. Yati argued for a progressive interpretation of Islam in relation to women's rights, arguing that Islam emphasized the importance of mutual love between man and wife, the desirability of women being economically active, and Islam's opposition to exploitative economic practices like speculation and usury.[172]

This solidarity between Islamic and secular women's rights activism was markedly consistent with the sentiments expressed by S. K. Trimurti when she edited Gerwis's magazine, *Wanita Sedar*, in the early 1950s. Trimurti penned editorials advocating revisions to the laws governing marriage, arguing that the conventions of *adat* (localized customs) and Islamic family law regarding divorce and reconciliation did retain some relevance in informing secular laws, but these needed to be structured and qualified by secular regulations because "people simultaneously occupy two roles: first as adherents of a faith, and second as citizens, both of which are equally important."[173] She attempted to bridge the gap on the controversial issue of polygyny by arguing that it ought to be allowed, but tightly regulated: all marriages (including polygynous ones) ought to be registered with the state, and polygynous marriages would have to secure the formal written consent of all wives. Moreover, the state ought to assess the financial ability of the husband to maintain all his wives equally, consistent with *fiqh*, failing which the marriage could not proceed.[174] This did not mean that Trimurti was willing to bow to orthodox *fiqh* on all matters: contradicting the established rulings of all four major schools of jurisprudence, she argued for men and women to be given equal rights of inheritance.[175] All of this creative adaptation of Islam and *adat* was published within a magazine that described the plight of Indonesian peasant women in graphic detail, praised female American labor organizers as "heroines of the working class," and celebrated international women's rights conferences—such as one held in Berlin on June 9, 1951—attended by Gerwani as well as by several Communist feminist organizations from the PRC, USSR, and Vietnam.[176]

Chalisah was a Minangkabau Gerwani member who attended a women's Islamic school in Padang Panjang, possibly the Diniyyah school that so many

[172] Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, 251.
[173] S. K. Trimurti, "Soal-soal Sekitar Perkwainan," *Wanita Sedar*, Year 2, no. 16, December 1951.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid.
[176] S. Ummi, "Wanita Didesa," *Wanita Sedar*, Year 2, no. 16, December 1951.

Permi activists attended or taught at. After graduating, she worked as an Islamic teacher at various women's schools. She divorced her first husband when he married a second wife, and her second husband was a Communist haji who encouraged her to join the PKI. She joined the party and became one of the founding members of Gerwis in 1950, serving as vice chair of the Gerwis branch in Bukittingi, West Sumatra. At the same time, Chalisah joined Muhammadiyah's women's organization, Aisyiyah, perceiving no contradiction in being a member of the PKI, Gerwis, and Aisyiyah at the same time. When interviewed by Saskia Wieringa, she explained that she perceived no problem with her multiple allegiances because Hatta had publicly said that citizens were free to join whichever organization they liked in a democratic society.[177] She also specifically explained that she saw no contradiction between being a Muslim and being a Gerwani member, because Islam called on its adherents to honor women, while condemning those who insulted women.[178]

As a Gerwis and Gerwani activist with a formal Islamic education, Chalisah specialized in resolving problems that arose in relation to Islam: on one occasion, she was sent to West Java to explain to a hundred female tea pickers who had joined both Gerwis and SABUPRI that their local Islamic teacher had been wrong in advising them to leave Gerwani—purportedly because Gerwani opposed Islam. She was successful, and the women rejoined both Gerwani and SABUPRI.[179] For the many Gerwis and Gerwani activists who made unprecedented efforts to address the needs and concerns of rural women, their motivations often mixed both Islamic piety and Marxist critiques of patriarchy. Some Muslim women's rights activists perceived no problem with their support for, or membership in, Marxist organizations like Gerwani or the PKI precisely because they were focused on concrete improvements to women's conditions, which they understood as part of their ethical obligations as good Muslims.

Like these Gerwani supporters, Djoeir Moehamad (b. 1916), whom we have already encountered in chapter 2, had little trouble reconciling his Muslim identity with his PSI membership. Djoeir became a full-time PSI activist and organizer after the revolution. He served first as a regional secretary for the greater Sumatra region, and then as the chairperson of PSI's

[177] Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, 252.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid.

Sumatra secretariat. Eventually, he was appointed a member of the PSI's governing council, responsible for the education, information, and propaganda secretariat.[180] Djoeir recalled that his first serious acquaintance with Marxist theory had occurred during his years as a student in Delhi University, where he became friends with a fellow student, Saleh Jakfar, who was a correspondent for *Pandji Islam*. Through many discussions with Saleh Jakfar, attending university debating club sessions, and his own study of both European and Asian Marxist literature—especially from China—in the Delhi University library, Djoeir "became acquainted with the intellectual fruits of Marx and Engels."[181] Returning to Indonesia during the Second World War, he became close to Pendidikan activists such as Leon Salim and Chatib Suleiman, and deepened his acquaintance with Marxist theory by reading old issues of Sjahrir and Hatta's *Daulat Ra'jat*.[182] He came to understand socialism as a viable alternative to "feudalism, capitalism, and imperialism," and by his own admission became more secular in his thinking. However, he was clear that he "never became a proponent of secularism," instead embracing socialism as a form of *ilmu pengetahuan*: "As a person who received a traditional Minangkabau Islamic education in a *surau*, Marxism could never abrogate [*menghapuskan*] the fundamental Islamic teachings in my soul."[183]

Djoeir chose to join the PSI because he understood Sjahrir's attempt to build "Indonesian socialism" as the creation of the "people's economy" that would benefit "the victims of feudalism, capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism."[184] To that end, the state would necessarily have a hand in controlling the production and distribution of key goods, but without abolishing all rights of private ownership.[185] Djoeir argued that "there was no need to obscure or fear the fact that socialism's genesis lay in Marx's *Das Kapital*, or that socialism was colored [*diwarnai*] by Marxism."[186] To support this line of argument, Djoeir pointed out that Sneevliet's introduction of Marxist ideas to the Indies in the early 1920s had been well received, with Tjokoraminoto and Haji Agus Salim developing these ideas into what Djoeir called "religious socialism," which eventually became part of Masjumi's legacy. This, Djoeir

[180] Djoeir Moehamad, *Memoar Seorang Sosialis*, 220.
[181] Ibid., 221–22.
[182] Ibid., 223.
[183] Ibid., 222.
[184] Ibid., 225.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid., 225–26.

observed, was abundantly clear from Sjafruddin Prawiranegara's *Politik dan Revolusi Kita* (1950), examined in the section "The 'Religious Socialists'" above, which outlined Masjumi's support for the 1945 constitution's embrace of socialism.[187]

Djoeir also asserted that the PSI's approach to Marxism was adaptive and creative. At the 1952 PSI congress in Bandung, Soebadio, a leading cadre, had moved that any mention of Marxism be removed from the PSI's charter. Djoeir supported Sjahrir's decision to retain it, because he felt confident that PSI members were not interested in being "doctrinal and orthodox Marxists."[188] Djoeir recalled Sjahrir arguing that Marxism was not the "basis" (*azas*) of the PSI's socialism, but that it "informed the PSI's orientation." It would therefore be unfair to jettison Marxism and its important contributions, though Djoeir acknowledged that "dogmatic applications Marxism give birth to political movements that are erroneous and destructive, whose consequences cannot be blamed on Marx and Engels."[189] Djoeir argued that unlike the PKI, the PSI prioritized democracy and humanism not merely as ends to be eventually achieved, but integral to means as well. Achieving the right political outcomes was important, but how those outcomes were achieved was equally important.

The PSI rejected the possibility of seizing of power through a coup d'état because a government that came to power without the consent of the *rakyat* would have to quash resistance with force.[190] The PSI, therefore, "respected the opinions of others, even if they were critical [of the PSI]," and rejected media censorship.[191] According to Djoeir, the 1952 PSI congress had made clear that "the works of Marx and Engels were not to be used as doctrine or dogma, but solely as *ilmu pengetahuan*, which was open to critique at all times."[192] This adaptive approach to Marxism, which valued its insights without elevating it to dogma, made possible PSI and Masjumi parliamentary cooperation throughout the 1950s.

[187] Ibid., 227–28.
[188] Ibid., 228.
[189] Ibid., 228–29.
[190] As a matter of fact, a top PSI leader, Soemitro Djodjohadikoesoemo, had become deeply implicated in the regional PRRI rebellion against Jakarta's authority from late 1957 onward after he fled a corruption investigation. The PRRI rebellion was not a coup d'état, however, and Sjahrir himself had been firmly against supporting the PRRI despite the PSI rank and file's resentment of Soekarno's authoritarian tendences. See Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 441, 445.
[191] Djoeir Moehamad, *Memoar Seorang Sosialis*, 230–31.
[192] Ibid., 229.

Soedjatmoko (1922–1989), a rather more prominent PSI member with the intellectual depth to rival Sjahrir, also evinced a willingness to accommodate Islam within his thoroughly socialist worldview. Soedjatmoko was a long-standing Sjahrir associate, a fellow Minangkabau, and part of the PSI's top leadership. He served as the editor of the main PSI periodicals, *Siasat*, *Pedoman*, and *Konfrontasi*, and was elected as a PSI delegate to Constitutional Assembly in 1956. Unlike Sjahrir, he maintained a good working relationship with Soekarno until around 1957, where they fell out over Soekarno's authoritarian turn.[193] Soedjatmoko's accommodation of Islam was not a result of profound personal religiosity, but rather a realistic recognition of the degree to which Islam permeated the social fabric of Indonesia. He fully recognized the degree to which Islam was imbricated in world history: if Indonesians were heirs to world culture, Islam was part of that world culture too.

> The development of Western European culture was the result of its contact with Islamic civilization during the Crusades. The Renaissance emerged from northern Italy's reacquaintance with the culture of classical Greece. The glory of Islamic civilization was itself the result of a meeting between Hellenistic culture, and after some time, the Turkic and Mongol cultures that had been integrated into Indian culture [the Timurid and Mongol influence on Persianate cultures of the Islamic world, such as the Mughals and Safavids]. In Indonesia, the development of Hindic culture and its later meeting with Islamic culture is evidence of the great benefits and progress that accrue from the meeting of one culture with another. The capacity for a culture to digest and adapt [*mencerna dan menyesuaikan*] elements of another culture in accordance with its own needs is evidence of the vitality of a nation's culture.[194]

To Soedjatmoko, Islam had shaped the Malay Archipelago's precolonial civilizations, the Netherlands East Indies, and naturally Indonesia itself. This ongoing process of interaction and adaptation of cultures was not merely desirable; it was a sign of vitality. By the same token, he argued that "socialist culture" had to be adaptive and creative, identifying merit and learning from it wherever it was to be found, instead of merely following the examples of established Communist countries.[195]

[193] George McTurnan Kahin and Milton L. Barnett, "In Memoriam: Soedjatmoko, 1922–1989," *Indonesia* 49 (1990): 133–39.
[194] Soedjatmoko, *Kebudayaan Sosialis*, ed. Muhidin M. Dahlan (Jakarta: Melibas, 2001), 61–62.
[195] Ibid., 65.

This inclusive approach to Islam was evident in his other writings as well. In a speech given at the United Nations University (UNU) in Tokyo in 1987, during the World Conference on Religion and Peace, Soedjatmoko posited that "poverty and injustice cannot be overcome by charity alone. Increased understanding of the nature and origin of poverty and the structures that perpetuate it injustice brings religion face-to-face with the perplexities of power and the complexities of transforming unjust institutions."[196] In other UNU speeches, Soedjatmoko argued that Islam was a religion of action, and that social implications necessarily flowed from Islamic ethics.[197] He also called upon Muslims to re-evaluate the practice of *ijtihad* and how it might be harnessed to develop Islamic responses to pressing questions, while exhorting Muslims to find common ground with other religions, belief systems, and modern ideologies.[198] Like Tan Malaka, he was clear about his admiration for Islamic civilization, accepting that it was an integral component of Indonesian culture, without necessarily being its defining aspect. To that extent, it was necessary, indeed beneficial, to synthesize the best that Islamic culture had to offer when building Indonesian socialism.[199]

This palpable comfort in mixing Islamic and Marxist inspirations was also evident in the speeches given by Constitutional Assembly delegates during the late 1950s. The Constitutional Assembly was elected in 1956 and tasked with formulating a new, permanent constitution to replace the provisional constitution of 1950. It spent much of its existence (1956–59) debating the place of religion in Indonesian society, and how that ought to be reflected in the constitution. Many delegates from various Marxist parties saw Islam as fundamental to the republic's identity but did not support its adoption as the official state religion.

One such delegate was Rd. Abdulrochman Wangsadikarta, who represented the PKI-influenced PTI (Partai Tani Indonesia, Indonesian Farmers Party). He argued that the constitution should continue to embrace Pancasila as a set of guiding principles, including *Ketuhanan Jang Maha Esa*, instead of making Islam the state religion. While he firmly supported labor unions, he stressed that the PTI did not want to see Indonesia emulate the USSR in its collectivization of agriculture or its marginalization of

[196] Soedjatmoko, *Transforming Humanity: The Visionary Writings of Soedjatmoko*, ed. and trans. Kathleen Newland and Kamala Chandrakirana Soedjatmoko (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1994), 163.
[197] Ibid., 173.
[198] Ibid., 174.
[199] Soedjatmoko, *Kebudayaan Sosialis*, 70.

religion.[200] Sahamad Sudjono, who represented Acoma in the Constitutional Assembly, was more explicit about his party's willingness to accommodate Islam. Acoma was a Trotskyist party led by Ibnu Parna, one of Tan Malaka's disciples. It won only one parliamentary seat in the 1955 elections, occupied by Ibnu Parna himself. Like the Partai Murba, it represented the continuation of Tan Malaka's intellectual legacy in Indonesian politics. Sahamad Sudjono made clear Acoma's willingness to collaborate with any "revolutionary Islamic group," because "both Communists and Muslims are opposed to the exploitation of humanity."[201]

Baheramsjah Sutan Indra, the representative of the Partai Buruh (Labor Party), went even further in signaling his willingness address Muslims' concerns. He admitted that Masjumi's Natsir had a valid point in wanting to make Islam the state religion, because Islamic teachings would not be a bad basis upon which to organize the state.[202] However, despite Indra's own adherence to Islam, he disagreed respectfully with Natsir, arguing that the difference in their opinions lay in his belief that there was "a firm line between matters of this world, and matters of the afterlife."[203] His distinction mirrored the distinction between *ibadat* and *muamalat*: questions of "social and economic organization" that did not impinge on rituals of worship (i.e., *muamalat*) were policy matters to be evaluated on the basis of their effects, and such policies ought to be formulated "using both religious and secular sources of inspiration."[204]

These arguments were common fare in the Constitutional Assembly. Despite the public paroxysms of piety that Masjumi delegates like Kasman Singodimedjo worked themselves into during their speeches, some delegates from Islamic parties openly declared their willingness to collaborate with Marxist counterparts, including Ahjak Sosrosugondo (NU) and R. Moh. Sjafii Wirakusumah (PSII).[205] Even PKI delegates stressed their respect for Islam. Sakirman, representing the PKI, argued that the constitution should not reflect the agenda of any one group, neither Communist nor Islamic,

[200] "Rd. Abdulrochman Wangsadikarta," in *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia dalam Konstituante*, vol. 1 (Bandung: Kementerian Penerangan, 1958), 48.

[201] "Sahamad Sudjono," in *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia dalam Konstituante*, 1:80.

[202] Baheramsjah Sutan Indra, in *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia dalam Konstituante*, 1:321.

[203] Ibid., 1:322.

[204] Ibid. *Ibadat* (Arabic: عبادة) refers to jurisprudence concerning rituals of worship.

[205] "Ahjak Sosrosugondo," in *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Dalam Konstitutante*, 1:26–28, and "R. Mohammed Sjafii Wirakusuma," in *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia dalam Konstitutante*, 1:60–61.

but be broad enough that the vast majority could accept it in the interests of national unity. He reminded his fellow delegates that the PKI did not campaign on a platform of creating a "proletarian constitution" during the 1955 elections, and had no intention of supporting one now.[206] He argued that the principles of Pancasila were worth upholding because the spirit of the revolution was one of unity, a unity expressed in Pancasila, which "respects and values religion and people's beliefs."[207] Moreover, he recognized that "religious principles" were an important motivating factor in the long struggle against the Dutch, and that Pancasila already recognized Islam as an esteemed and integral component of the republic.[208] Both the PKI and sundry Marxist parties were keen to signal their friendliness toward Islam. Their opposition to enshrining Islam as a state religion was not based on an ideological aversion to religion; instead, it was framed in terms of the need to preserve national unity in a time of extended economic crisis and centrifugal pressures.

Aidit himself went further. He asserted the importance of winning Muslim support during a speech he gave at the second plenary session of the PKI central committee (November 8–10, 1954). He began by reaffirming his support for the first Ali Sastroamidjojo cabinet (July 1953–August 1955), which included no PKI ministers, but did include three NU and two PSII ministers.[209] He argued that not all Islamic and nationalist parties could be lumped together as "birds of a feather."[210] Not all such parties were influenced by Western imperialist propaganda, and therefore "it would be wrong for the Communists to generalize them and refuse cooperation with any Muslim or nationalist party and leader. We should incessantly seek close cooperation based on some specific and concrete program . . . experience has shown that there are plenty among the nationalist and Muslim masses who agree with our party."[211] Going beyond the usual rhetoric about how the PKI was not anti-Islam, Aidit was expressing the PKI's willingness to cooperate with Islamic parties like the NU and PSII at the policymaking and electoral levels, on the basis of a concordance in policy goals.

[206] "Ir. Sakirman," in *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia dalam Konstitutante*, 1:14.
[207] Ibid., 1:16.
[208] Ibid., 1:18, 23–24.
[209] D. N. Aidit, "Untuk Persatuan Jang Lebih Luas Dalam Semua Kekuatan Nasional di Indonesia," in *D.N. Aidit Pilihan Tulisan I* (Djakarta: Jajasan Pembaruan, 1959), 231.
[210] Ibid., 237.
[211] Ibid., 237–38.

It is revealing that the PKI was voicing support for Muslim parties in government while the opposition it castigated as "victims of Western imperialist propaganda" also consisted of a Marxist party (PSI) and an Islamic party (Masjumi). Aidit even went on to argue that cooperation between the PKI, nationalist parties, and Islamic parties ought to extend beyond electoral coordination in the lead-up to the 1955 elections: "As far as we are concerned, this cooperation should be continued after the general elections regardless of the elections' results. What we would like to have is something like a diversity in unity."[212]

Aidit reinforced these arguments in an article he published on October 10, 1955, in which he provided a preliminary analysis of the recently held general elections.[213] Conscious that the PKI had done surprisingly well in the 1955 elections, securing approximately 16% of all votes cast and thirty-nine parliamentary seats, Aidit was keen to impress upon readers the importance of cooperating with Islamic parties, presumably to maximize the PKI's influence on policymaking given the kingmaker position it occupied.[214] In an extended defense of NU, Aidit admitted the importance of centuries-old Islamic traditions, but pointed out that tradition alone could not account for the electoral successes of NU:

> We often hear people say that NU is "conservative," "undemocratic," or "not modern" in problems of religion. These are issues with which the PKI will not meddle. But it is clear that in political problems, especially in the speeches of the NU leaders during the parliamentary elections, NU has indicated a tolerance and readiness to bring democracy into being and to carry out a policy of an anticolonialist nationalist character . . . [NU-backed policies during the Ali cabinet] indicated the readiness of the NU to cooperate with the democratic parties, with the PNI and PKI, with the sole qualification that they would do nothing that would be injurious to Islam.[215]

[212] Ibid., 238.

[213] D. N. Aidit, "Selamatkan dan Konsolidasi Kemenangan Front Persatuan," *Harian Rakyat*, October 10, 1955.

[214] The PSI had failed miserably, securing only 2% of the vote and five parliamentary seats, while Masjumi's 21% and fifty-seven seats, though impressive, left it far from a majority. By contrast, the PNI's 22% and fifty-seven seats, as well as the NU's 18% and forty-five seats, meant that the PKI was the fourth-largest parliamentary bloc and would likely be a key player in any coalition government.

[215] D. N. Aidit, "Selamatkan dan Konsolidasi Kemenangan Front Persatuan," in *D.N. Aidit Pilihan Tulisan I* (Djakarta: Jajasan Pembaruan, 1959), 321.

He went on to crow that it was Masjumi's supposed accommodation of capitalism that led to NU's success: "The harmony of Islam with the special character of Indonesia, together with the anticolonialist policy of the NU, is more attractive to the Muslim masses than the modernism of Masjumi in the field of religion and the political agreement of this party with the interests of foreign monopolistic capital."[216]

Aidit sought to build bridges with Islamic parties and Muslim voters by arguing that pragmatic concordance on policy goals could bring Communists and Muslims together. In practice, this would have meant agreement on the desirability of nationalizing foreign business interests in lucrative sectors such as plantation agriculture and petroleum extraction, or land reform in which sharecroppers and smallholders would receive economically viable plots of land. At the height of its political influence in the late 1950s, the PKI was so invested in portraying itself as a "moderate, tolerant, and genuinely national party" that it even dropped national-level land redistribution from its campaign promises, emphasizing instead its willingness to participate in a "national coalition government."[217] Herbert Feith has argued that the PKI was successful in doing so and was not generally perceived as antireligious.[218]

Aidit also claimed that the PKI was committed to "doing nothing that would be injurious to Islam," signaling that the PKI was ready to accommodate the sensitivities of its Muslim supporters and parliamentary partners. The PKI was not averse to cooperating with any Islamic party, as long as they could work toward shared goals. This was not merely political maneuvering in expectation of future cabinet positions; the PKI had already been supporting the PNI, NU, and PSII coalition government of Ali Sastroamidjojo for the past two years. In a rare moment of magnanimity, Aidit even declared his willingness to cooperate with Masjumi (which he had been vilifying for years) if they could agree on policy goals: "The PKI believes that the basic enemy of the Indonesia people at present is the remnants of Dutch colonialism in the fields of economy, politics, education and culture. To liquidate these remnants of Dutch colonialism entirely, all national forces must be unified. The PKI has never rejected cooperation with any party as a means to achieve this goal, and has never rejected cooperation with Masjumi."[219]

[216] Ibid.
[217] Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, 358–60.
[218] Ibid., 360.
[219] Ibid., 324.

Masjumi parliamentarians never did accept this olive branch. It is clear, however, that the PKI was serious in attempting to garner Muslim support during the parliamentary democracy period. This was partially a matter of pragmatic coalition-building for a party that had chosen the democratic route to power, but it was also a genuine attempt to articulate a relationship between politics and religion, or a relationship between the public and the private spheres, which could accommodate Islam and Communism simultaneously. This incipient Indonesian political consciousness, in which a citizen could be both Muslim and Communist, led Aidit to claim that voting for the PKI was *halal*, while voting for Masjumi was *haram*; his point was that parties ought to be judged by their policy goals and the fruits of their labor, not by the claims they made on communal identities and allegiances.[220] If the PKI's policies achieved laudable ends for Muslims, then it was an acceptable party for Muslims to support. At the bare minimum, Aidit's writings from this period make it hard to give credence to the insistent claim made by Masjumi parliamentarians like Isa Anshary that the PKI was bent on destroying religion. They also make it easy to see why Muslims in the PKI like Ahmad Dasuki Siradj could conceive of exhorting his fellow Muslims to abandon Masjumi and support the PKI to meet their Islamic moral obligations.

The Soekarnoist Synthesis

As the 1950s wore on and the political deadlock in parliament showed no signs of resolving itself after two elections, Soekarno grew increasingly frustrated with his largely ceremonial role as president under the provisional constitution of 1950. In late 1956, Soekarno began to make his play in the court of public opinion, claiming that political and economic stasis would soon lead to generalized crisis, and promising to eventually reveal a "conception" (*konsepsi*) that could forge a new national consensus.[221] By February 21, 1957, it became clear that his *konsepsi* involved abolishing parliament in favor of a "national council" (*dewan nasional*) that would include not only political parties but also members of "functional groups" such as labor, youth, peasant, and women's organizations. It also involved forming a

[220] Organisasi Pembela Islam, *Peristiwa Rapat P.K.I. Di Malang, 28 Maret 1954* (Malang: Organisasi Pembela Islam, 1954).

[221] Daniel S. Lev, *The Transition to Guided Democracy: Indonesian Politics, 1957–1959* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Southeast Asian Program Publications, 1966), 29.

cabinet representing all parties that had won seats in the 1955 elections, including the PKI. By August 17, 1957, this *konsepsi* had evolved into a political manifesto that Soekarno called Manipol-USDEK, an acronym representing a return to the 1945 constitution (under which the president held much more executive power), socialism à la Indonesia, guided democracy, a planned economy, and the promotion of cohesive national identity.[222]

Predictably, this synthesizing political vision, intended to recapture the unity and passion of the revolution, was deeply unacceptable to Masjumi and the PSI, who were wary of giving the PKI ministerial portfolios. Soekarno's impending dismantlement of parliamentary democracy catalyzed Masjumi support for regional rebellions like the PRRI/Permesta movements, which began in March 1957. This eventually led to the proscription of Masjumi in August 1960, on the grounds that it had been implicated in supporting both the Darul Islam and PRRI/Permesta rebellions. Soekarno's own paranoia about a PSI plot against him resulted in the dissolution of the PSI and the imprisonment of Sjahrir in August 1960. The Constitutional Assembly was dissolved in July 1959, and the 1945 constitution replaced the 1950 provisional constitution under Soekarno's approving gaze.

Even while the architecture of parliamentary democracy was being dismantled piecemeal and Masjumi progressively alienated, Soekarno continued to speak publicly about his desire for a broad national consensus that was inclusive enough to accommodate both Communists and Muslims, a beloved theme of his since *Nationalism, Islam and Marxism* (1926). He was remarkably consistent about the importance he accorded Islam within Indonesian politics, even before the dismemberment of parliament began. In a speech he delivered at Universitas Indonesia in Jakarta on May 7, 1953, Soekarno argued that "Islamic principles" (*cita-cita Islam*) were integral to the nation.[223] Soekarno's speech was made in response to a letter sent by a Muslim student during the celebration of the *Isra* and *Mi'raj* (the Prophet Muhammad's journey to Jerusalem and his ascent to heaven) at the presidential palace that year. The student had posed three questions: first, whether the nation-state was irreconcilable with the Islamic state that many Muslims desired; second, what the relationship between Islam and Pancasila was; and third, whether it was acceptable for the winner of the upcoming

[222] Ibid., 30–31.

[223] Sukarno, "Negara Nasional Dan Cita-cita Islam: Kuliah umum di Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta, 7 Mei 1953," in *Bung Karnno dan Islam: Kumpulan Pidato Tentang Islam* (Jakarta: CV Haji Masagung, 1990), 1.

general elections to implement policies driven by their ideology even if large segments of society were opposed to said policies.[224]

Soekarno gently chided the student for his "many misunderstandings of both nationalism and Islam," but thanked him for the opportunity to elaborate on these questions publicly.[225] He argued that religion in general and Islam in particular could never be shunted into the private sphere and excised from the political realm, for "Islam is a way of life."[226] Soekarno cited the Prophet Muhammad's experiences leading a mixed community of Muslims and non-Muslims in Medina as evidence that Islam could and did provide guidance in matters of statecraft, although he stopped short of explaining how exactly the Prophet Muhammad's example might be adapted to present-day politics. According to Soekarno, "Islam does provide social principles [*cita-cita kemasyarakatan*], only we interpret them in different ways."[227] He asserted that the principles of Islam could be induced from the Qur'an and hadith: for example, the guarantee that non-Muslims were free to practice their religion as they saw fit.[228] Soekarno insisted that Islamic principles ought to inform policymaking, with the caveat that non-Muslim concerns were also worthy of consideration, just as the Prophet Muhammad had done in Medina.

Soekarno rejected the separation of church and state as a peculiarly Christian invention, necessitated by the secular power historically wielded by the church. He stressed that politically empowering Muslims would not lead to the establishment of a theocracy because Islam did not possess a clerical hierarchy the way Catholicism did. While admitting his deficiencies as a layman, Soekarno pointed out that he had never in all his reading come across the issue of nations and national identity (*negara*) in Islam; "nation" was not part of Islam's vocabulary. He argued that Islam did not prescribe any one format for the nation, merely principles of societal organization: concepts like *Dar al-Islam* (lit. the abode of peace) were not coterminous with the nation and could not be grafted onto the nation as if they were blueprints for political organization valid for all ages.[229]

If anything, Soekarno argued, Islamic principles like deliberation and consensus (*musyawarah*) facilitated democratic governance, a form of societal

[224] Ibid., 3–4.
[225] Ibid., 5.
[226] Ibid., 5–7.
[227] Ibid., 7.
[228] Ibid., 8–9.
[229] Ibid., 10.

organization that did not negate the Muslim community's position within *Dar al-Islam*.[230] By way of example, Soekarno explained his own experience as the president of the original unitary Republic of Indonesia proclaimed in 1945, which subsequently became the federal United States of Indonesia (Republik Indonesia Sarekat) in 1950, and which became a unitary republic again shortly thereafter. He pointed out that the republic's forms of governance, its "internal structure" (*interne structuur*), had undergone changes (*wisseling*), but it remained the same republic. In a similar way, the structures of governance could change over time, but this did not negate the Islamic principles guiding statecraft, or the fact that the Muslim community was part of *Dar al-Islam*.[231] Soekarno reminded his audience that the republic was a nation-state (*negara nasional*) not an Islamic state (*negara Islam*), but this in no way "negated the rights of Muslims to propagandize what they believe in, nor the rights of Communists to do the same."[232] These ideas were already firmly embedded in Soekarno's worldview in 1953, long before he first proposed NASAKOM as a political philosophy in 1956.

Another of Soekarno's speeches from the guided democracy period, after NASAKOM had been elevated to the level of a national slogan, shows how the sentiments expressed in the 1953 speech developed over the course of the parliamentary democracy period. On March 15, 1960, Soekarno gave a speech at the Presidential Palace in Jakarta to mark the traditional anniversary of the Prophet Muhammad's first revelation. In this speech, titled "Islam, Agama Amal" (Islam, the Religion of *Amal*), Soekarno embraced a vision of a dynamic, active Islam compatible with Indonesian socialism.[233] *Amal* can be translated as deeds or works, but also as charity in the sense of *caritas*, the love of God manifest in love for one's fellows.[234] In calling Islam the religion of *amal* Soekarno was suggesting that Islam was not just a collection of proscriptions and rules, but a religion that prompted believers to turn principles into virtuous action; he specifically used the English term "gospel of action" to describe *amal*.[235] He pointed out that prosperity (*kemakmuran*) and the cultivation of a specifically Indonesian identity (*kepribadian*

[230] Ibid., 8–9.
[231] Ibid., 9–10.
[232] Ibid., 10.
[233] Sukarno, "Islam, Agama Amal: Amanat Peringatan Nuzulul Qur'an di Istana Negara, 15 Maret 1960," in *Bung Karnno dan Islam: Kumpulan Pidato Tentang Islam* (Jakarta: CV Haji Masagung, 1990), 54.
[234] Ibid., 53.
[235] Ibid.

kebudayaan), Manipol-USDEK's aims, were laudable goals but did not constitute ends in themselves. Instead, he argued that the praxis of Indonesian socialism, guided democracy, and a planned economy should be a virtuous expression of *amal*, of Islamic values put into practice.[236] As in 1953, Islam provided a moral framework within which he positioned his political activities. Islam shaped his goals, but Soekarno felt free to formulate his own novel ways—as it turned out, a path to perdition—of achieving those goals.

Soekarno's synthesis was appealing to many Marx-influenced intellectuals both within and without the PNI, such as Roeslan Abdoelgani, Mangunsarkoro, Iwa Koesoema Soemantri, and Sajuti Melik, none of whom were PKI members. Many of them wrote their own pamphlets and gave speeches in support of Soekarno's synthetic political philosophy, confirming their belief in the viability of mixing Islamic identity and Marxist politics. Remarkably, this amalgam was evident even among Soekarno's political opponents. Hatta, Soekarno's longtime vice president and the other indispensable half of the revolutionary duumvirate, resigned his post on December 1, 1956. He had become disillusioned with Soekarno's increasingly erratic and self-aggrandizing behavior, including his incipient autocratic tendencies.[237] After resigning, "Hatta became the symbol not of unity but of dissension."[238] But even the disillusioned Hatta continued to blend Marxist and Islamic inspirations.

Shortly after his resignation, Hatta delivered a speech at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, China, in which he made no secret of his own commitment to Islamic socialism. He began by asserting that socialism had many interlocutors, but that "Marx was the first to bring scientific clarity and rigor to socialism, showing how a socialist society would organically evolve as the result of class conflict over time."[239] Hatta stressed that Marx did not hate capitalism, although many of his present-day followers did; capitalism was merely one stage in a historical process, and was the "mother that would give birth to socialism."[240] Marx, according to Hatta, "did not express either hate or worship, because his was a critique of consecutive stages of

[236] Ibid., 54.
[237] Lev, *The Transition to Guided Democracy*, 25–26.
[238] Ibid., 26.
[239] Muhammad Hatta, "Sosialisme Di Indonesia (Pidato Di Depan Para Mahasiswa Universitas Sun Yat Sen Di Kanton, Pada Tanggal 11 Oktober 1957)," in *Muhammad Hatta Bicara Marxis Dan Sosialisme Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Melibas, 1975), 55.
[240] Ibid., 56.

social development, from feudalism to capitalism to socialism. This was a scientific opinion, not a fantasy of paradise on earth."[241] Hatta criticized the PKI for attempting shortcuts in Indonesia's long journey toward socialism, implying that its supporters were ignorant but impassioned radicals with unrealistic expectations.[242] He deliberately described them as followers of the "Marxist *aliran* [lit. stream]," which he pointed out was not the only socialist movement in Indonesia. The "real practitioner of Marx's teachings" was the PSI, a "social democratic party both in form and in substance."[243] What is clear from this formulation was that Hatta saw Marx's ideas as an invaluable source of historical analysis and critiques of capitalism, which should naturally inform Indonesian politics. To Hatta, Marxism was not a teleological political philosophy that provided a clear blueprint for the future; anyone who took Marx to be an infallible prophet was deeply mistaken.[244]

Hatta recognized that Marxism did not exist in a vacuum, and Indonesian socialists had necessarily adapted Marxist ideas. He argued that Marx's ideas alone had not given birth to socialism in Indonesia; two other "sources" of socialism were Islam and the "collective character" (*corak kolektif*) indigenous to Indonesian culture.[245] Hatta asserted that "socialism based on Islam" was a powerful political force in Indonesia because

> Allah the most loving, generous, and just has obliged Muslims to create a society based on love and mercy, on a mutual recognition of humanity, mutual help, social justice, and peace in men's souls. Because all these things can only be obtained by implementing socialism, where the means of production are owned by the majority and a spirit of cooperation animates society . . . then Islam fundamentally demands the implementation of socialism.[246]

[241] Ibid.
[242] Ibid., 60–63.
[243] Ibid., 63.
[244] Hatta was no dilletante when it came to Marxist theory. Besides the articles he published in Pendidikan newspapers, examined in chapter 2, his facility with Marxist theory manifested itself in the public debates he had with the future Communist leader Tan Ling Djie. These played out across the pages of *Sin Tit Po* in the 1930s, and evinced a deep engagement with the writings of not just Marx and Engels, but also of Eduard Bernstein and Karl Kautsky, particularly Kautsky's *Bernstein und das Sozialdemokratische Programm: Eine Antikritik* (1899). See "Ajaran Marx, atau kepintaran sang murid membeo?," in *Muhammad Hatta Bicara Marxis dan Sosialisme di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Melibas, 1975), 1–51.
[245] Hatta, "Sosialisme di Indonesia," 64.
[246] Ibid., 65.

Naturally, such ideas required fertile soil to germinate. Left-leaning print culture of the 1950s provides a glimpse of a discursive climate receptive to both Soekarno and Hatta. *Pesat*, a weekly magazine edited by Sajuti Melik, was a relatively popular Marxist magazine sans party affiliation. It circulated throughout the archipelago: issues were sold in Makassar (Sulawesi), Palembang (South Sumatra), Rangkasbitung and Ciamas (West Java), as well as Jakarta. A 1951 issue carried extensive advertisements for the Islamic publisher Bulan Bintang's catalog, which included Tjokroaminoto's *Islam and Socialism* (1924). The same issue also carried advertisements for biographies of Ho Chi Minh.[247] This particular issue included a panegyric to the Danish system of cooperatives, which were praised for being part of a mixed economy and the beneficiary of both public and private investment; the article noted that cooperatives had been established with good results in both capitalist and Communist countries.[248] Other articles celebrated the actions of the Sunan Kalidjogo company of the Diponegoro division from the Indonesian Revolution, a company "clothed in both religion as well as socialism" (*jang berbadju keagamaan maupun jang berbadju kesosialan [sosialisme]*).[249] *Pesat* also ran advertisements for clearly Islamic newspapers like the daily *Darul Islam*, which began publication in 1954, describing itself as opposed to "ANTI-GOD AND ANTI-ISLAM groups" (*aliran-aliran ANTI-TUHAN DAN ANTI-ISLAM*).[250] Despite the fact that *Pesat*'s Marxist orientation must have been obvious to all its readers, it clearly had significant Muslim readership. Other articles rebuked Isa Anshary of Masjumi for claiming that socialism, marhaenism, collectivism, and nationalism were all anti-Islam; *Pesat* argued that intellect was God's gift to humanity, and the exercise of human intellect to solve pressing problems was pleasing in God's sight.[251]

Unlike *Pesat*, *Pikiran Rakjat* was a 1950s national daily broadsheet, but it was also sympathetic to Islamic and Marxist concerns, making room for both in its pages. *Pikiran Rakjat* was particularly supportive of unions like SABUPRI, the powerful plantation workers union Hasan Raid worked for, explaining the necessity of SABUPRI strikes given postwar inflation and the

[247] *Pesat*, May 30, 1951.
[248] Anonymous, "Kooperasi di Denmark," *Pesat*, May 30, 1951.
[249] Anonymous, "Kompi Sunan Kalidjogo," *Pesat*, May 30, 1951.
[250] *Pesat*, January 9, 1954. Emphasis according to the advertisement.
[251] Saja (pseudonym), "Menolok Hukum Tuhan?," *Pesat*, January 16, 1954.

rising cost of daily necessities.[252] Other articles even discussed the feasibility of developing a people's economy (*ekonomi rakjat*) that transferred ownership of the means of production into the hands of collectives instead of the state.[253] PKI leaders like Alimin published in *Pikiran Rakjat*, as did critical Marxists like I. N. Suprapti of the Murba Party.[254] At the same time, *Pikiran Rakjat* published articles on key matters of Muslim concern, such as the pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj). In one particularly long article, an embedded journalist followed the first ever batch of ten thousand pilgrims performing the hajj under the auspices of the newly independent Indonesian government, relating the conditions of the hajj and the experiences of pilgrims.[255]

Pikiran Rakjat even made room for extended rebuttals of Alimin's articles, in which a self-evidently Muslim contributor criticized Alimin's analysis of Indonesian political developments, ending his article with a triumphant "BIS MILLAHIRRAHMANIRRAHIM!"[256] Even such rebuttals were respectful, however: the author made a point of referring to Alimin as *saudara* (brother), and offered Alimin his respectful greetings (*salam*).[257] This cordiality was not unusual for daily broadsheets during the parliamentary democracy period. *Haluan*, published in Padang, West Sumatra, ran articles celebrating the *Isra* and *Mi'raj* and advertisements for Muhammadiyah courses. Alongside these was an article by Nusjirwan Adil, secretary-general of the Padang branch of PKI-controlled union SOBSI, in which he offered Islamic greetings for the festive occasion.[258] This brief survey is by no means representative of 1950s Indonesian print culture, but it does suggest Islam and Marxism coexisted in mundane ways in the minds of ordinary Indonesians. This coexistence was simply uncontentious to much of the reading public; this was the social context that made Soekarno's NASAKOM seem plausible in the first place.

[252] Samrin, "Kemenangan Buruh," *Pikiran Rakjat*, October 11, 1950; Anonymous, "SARBUPRI dan SBG Dibantu Penuh Oleh BTI," *Pikiran Rakjat*, October 16, 1950. SABUPRI was affiliated with SOBSI, the general union strongly influenced by the PKI.

[253] Yap, "Ekonomi Rakjat," *Pikiran Rakjat*, October 16, 1950.

[254] Alimin, "Alimin Tentang Revolusi," *Pikiran Rakjat*, October 16, 1950; Alimin, "Alimin Tentang Revolusi (part II)," *Pikiran Rakjat*, October 17, 1950; I.N. Suprapti, "Partai dan Nagara," *Pikiran Rakjat*, October 19, 1950.

[255] Anonymous, "Naik Hadji Zaman Sekarang," *Pikiran Rakjat*, October 17, 1950.

[256] H. R., "Pengetahuan Politik: Adakah Gunanja?," *Pikiran Rakjat*, November 25, 1950. The phrase is known as the *basmala* (بسملة) and means "In the name of God the most gracious and most merciful."

[257] Ibid.

[258] Gafar Djambek, "Islam Itu Tinggi tidak ada jang meatasnja, manakala tanggung-tanggung tidak akan mendjumpainja," *Haluan*, March 28, 1955; Nusjirwan Adil, "Sjarief Said Membuka Topengnja Sendiri," *Haluan*, March 29, 1955.

Islam and Marxism in Cultural Production

Cultural production reveals much about the conditions of possibility undergirding Soekarno's NASAKOM or Hatta's "socialism based on Islam." The sentiments expressed in literary circles say more about the 1950s intelligentsia than they do about ordinary people, but still provide a glimpse into a broader discursive realm that made conciliations of Islam and Marxism conceivable to politicians and plausible to their audiences. What is evident in the sources examined here is how uncontentious it was to invoke Islam and Marxism in the same breath; many educated people simply did not feel it was transgressive to do so, because they were already engaged in the project of translating the world to Indonesia, placing their education and broadening intellectual horizons in dialogue with their personal subjectivities as Muslims.[259] Novels, plays, and poems can sometimes speak volumes where conventional historical sources are silent, and they can even reveal subtleties of feeling and experience that no newspaper or archival document can.[260]

The cultural production of the parliamentary democracy period reveals the anguished but open-minded zeitgeist of this era. It expresses the manifold hopes and anxieties of Indonesians as they searched themselves and the world around them for inspirations that would facilitate the fulfillment of their national visions after a decade of war and privation. These desires, densely encapsulated by works of art, made Soekarno or Hatta's conciliations of Islam and Marxism plausible, even attractive, to many Indonesians. This section will analyze a poem by the South Asian Muslim poet Muhammad Iqbal, translated into Indonesian during the 1950s, and a magazine published by the PKI-affiliated artists' association, LEKRA (Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat, Institute of People's Culture).

The poet and polymath Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938) is claimed by Pakistan as its spiritual father and national poet. The recipient of an excellent classical Islamic education as well as degrees from Cambridge and Munich, Iqbal was also steeped in Urdu and Persian poetry, with their strong Sufi influences. A staunch Muslim who integrated his Western education with his Islamic faith, he became highly esteemed in both Europe and South Asia as a poet, philosopher, and academic. This endeared him to Indonesian Muslim intellectuals who were engaged in a similar project of translating the world to

[259] Jennifer Lindsay, "Heirs to World Culture: An Introduction," in *Heirs to World Culture: Being Indonesian, 1950–65*, ed. Jennifer Lindsay and Maya H. T. Liem (Leiden: KITLV, 2012), 4–9.
[260] White, "Introduction."

Indonesia. Mohammad Natsir and Jusuf Wibisono of Masjumi were particularly enamored with Iqbal, evident in Natsir's *Dapatkah Dipisahkan Politik Dari Agama?* (1953) and Wibisono's *Islam dan Sosialisme* (1950), which lamented that Iqbal's work had not been translated into Indonesian.[261]

The first of Iqbal's works to be translated into Indonesian was a collection of Persian poetry. This was his first anthology, upon which his reputation as a poet rested. *The Secrets of the Self* (اسرار خودی , *Asrar-i Khudi*, 1915) was published as *Rahasia-rahaisa Pribadi* in 1953. Unsurprisingly, Natsir made time to provide a glowing foreword to the translation, despite his busy schedule as Masjumi's parliamentary leader. The broader context for the translation of Iqbal's work was the circulation of Islamic texts across the Indian Ocean, linking Egypt and Arabia to South Asia and the Malay Archipelago.[262] The Ahmadiyyah of South Asia had taken energetically to using both print and translation to magnify their influence, and both Ahmaddiyah tracts as well as rebuttals by scholars like Iqbal regularly found their way to Indonesia.[263] Intriguingly, the Indonesian editors and translators of *Secrets of the Self*, Bahrum Rangkuti and Arif Husain, made the decision to append a few extra poems from Iqbal's other works. Of these appended poems, one poem stands out: "Lenin before God" (Lenin di Depan Tuhan), taken from Iqbal's later anthology of Urdu poetry, *Gabriel's Wing* (بال جبریل, Bal-e-Jibril, 1935).

It is first necessary to point out that *The Secrets of the Self* was structured around an underlying conceit that fit well with "Lenin before God." This conceit employed many different dialogues to explain Iqbal's philosophical framework for human growth and fulfillment: it prized individuality, postulating that one drew closer to God the more individual or unique one was. This growth in individuality could only be achieved through the mastery of one's *khudi* (which Iqbal translates as Ego).[264] This philosophy was translated into political ideals by Iqbal himself, in his contribution to R. A. Nicholson's introduction: "Thus the kingdom of God on earth means the democracy of more or less individuals, presided over by the most unique

[261] Wibisono, *Islam dan Sosialisme*, 2:27.

[262] Terenjit Sevea, "Making Medinas in the East: Islamist Connections and Progressive Islam," in *Islamic Connections: Muslim Societies in South and Southeast Asia* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2009), 149–74.

[263] Iqbal Singh Sevea, "The Ahmadiyya Print Jihad in South and Southeast Asia," in *Islamic Connections: Muslim Societies in South and Southeast Asia*, ed. R. Michael Feener and Terenjit Sevea (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2009), 134, 145.

[264] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, ed. and trans. R. A. Nicholson (London: Macmillan, 1920), 48.

individual possible on this earth. Nietzsche had a glimpse of this ideal race, but his atheism and aristocratic prejudices marred his whole conception."[265]

Iqbal's poetry, as Sevea argues, was often a vehicle for his political visions, visions open to the West but never acceding to the transplantation of Western practices and institutions—that is to say, Iqbal's political visions were creative and adaptive as well.[266] The dialogue between Lenin and God, though from another anthology of poems, was thus a cognate of the many dialogues in *The Secrets of the Self*, which included a dialogue between coal and diamond (XIII), a dialogue between a sheikh and a Brahmin, and a dialogue between the Ganges and the Himalayas (XIV).[267] This structural congruence was perhaps one reason why Bahrum Rangkuti and Arif Husain saw fit to include "Lenin before God" in their translation.[268] However, keeping in mind the political and intellectual climate of parliamentary democracy, it would be equally reasonable to interpret this editorial choice as stemming from the particular relevance of "Lenin before God" to an Indonesian audience. The poem is so striking that it merits full reproduction here.[269]

Indonesian	**English**
Sungguh di segala ruang dan roh dunia ini	All space and all that breathes bear witness; truth
WujudMu termaktub dan gitu djuga sifatMu abadi	It is indeed; You are, and do not remain.
Betapa aku akan tahu, kau ada atau pun tak ada	How could I know that God was or was not,
Selagi hitungan "nentiasa berkisar dan berganti?	Where reason's reckonings shifted hour by hour?
Siapakah jang mendengar musik-kejadian segala ini	The peerer at planets, the counter-up of plants,

[265] Ibid., xxvii.

[266] Iqbal Singh Sevea, *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal: Islam and Nationalism in Late Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 126–29.

[267] Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, 104–15.

[268] Muhammad Iqbal, *Asrar-i Kuhdi: Rahasia-Rahasia Pribadi*, ed. and trans. Bahrum Rangkuti and Arif Husain (Djakarta: Pustaka Islam, 1953), 139.

[269] English translation cross-referenced against the translation from the original Urdu undertaken by Khan and Koshul. See Farzad Rafi Khan and Basit Bilal Koshul, "Lenin in Allah's Court: Iqbal's Critique of Western Capitalism and the Opening Up of the Postcolonial Imagination in Critical Management Studies," *Organization* 18 (2011): 303–22.

Indonesian	English
Penindjau kembang puspita atau penghitung bintang kemintang?	Heard nothing there of Nature's infinite music;
Hari ini kulihat keradjaan dan negara	Today, I witness and acknowledge realms
Jang bagiku hanjalah sunglap kaum geredja	That I once thought the mummery of the Church.
Sedang kami meringkuk, dibelenggu hari dan malam	We, manacled in the chains of day and night!
Kau, pembina dan abadi, perona sang zaman	You, molder of all time's atoms, builder of eons!
Tuhan, berikanlah padaku waktu seketika menjawab soalku	God, let me have leave to ask this one question,
selamanja ini tak terdiamkan kaum sardjana	Not answered by the subtleties of the scholars,
Ini Tuhan . . . selagi aku hidup di bawah atap tenda langit angkasa	It is this, God: that while I lived under the sky-tent's roof
Guntjang dan duri tertudjam dalam hatiku	A thorn rankled in my heart
Dan seraja pikiran demi pikiran begitu mengamuk dengan jiwaku	And made such chaos in my soul of all its thoughts
Tiadalah padanja suatu negara apa pun, sedang ditjakapnja	I could not keep my tumbling words in bounds.
Siapakah sebenarnja orang itu jang ber-Tuhan kepadaMu	Oh, of what mortal race art thou the God?
Itu machluk, dibentuk oleh abu dibawah langitMu ini:	Those creatures formed of dust beneath these heavens?
Perenggi-putjat dewa sang Timur	Europe's pale cheeks are Asia's pantheon,
Logam kemilau dewa negeri Maghribi	And Europe's pantheon her glittering metals.
Dimana marak menjala tempat landasan dan terang pelita ilmu	A blaze of art and science lights the West
Gelita Tandus oleh sumber kehidupan!	With darkness that no Fountain of Life dispels;
Dalam kesjahduan, pujuk dan foja	In high-reared grace, in glory and in grandeur,

Indonesian	English
Bank kemilau melampaui RumahMu, Tuhan	The towering Bank surpasses Your house;
Mereka bermain dengan batu-batu dadu	What they call commerce is a game of dice
Laba bagi seorang, adjal jang tiba-tiba ribuan menunggu	For one, profit, for millions swooping death.
Ilmu, falsafah, kuliah dan konstitusi	There science, philosophy, scholarship, government,
mengadjar kesamaan bagi semua, tapi menghisap darah manusia	Preach man's equality and drink men's blood;
berfoja telandjang mabuk pitam, butuh dan mengaggur	Naked debauchery, and want, and unemployment
Kemenangan gemilang negeri Maghribi!	Are these mean triumphs of the Frankish arts!
Amboi benua . . . tak kundjung diberkahi sinar nazari,	Denied celestial grace a nation goes
uap dan listrik mengikat hasil kerdjanja	No further than electricity or steam;
itu alat mendera segala budi dibawah telapak kakinja	Death to the heart, machines stand sovereign,
Mampus sirna sang hati, dan tegak berdaulat itu pesawat	Engines that crush all sense of human kindness.
namun alat di-hitung-hitung disana-sini, bagai tokoh memberat	Yet signs are counted here and there that Fate,
pemain tjatur kehabisan rentjana dan muslihat	The chess-player, has check-mated all their cunning.
Dan djari djemari Si Tua Bangka lemah berkerut antero mangkuk	The Tavern shakes, its warped foundations crack,
wadjah sendjakala Maghribi memerah dengan tjet	The Old Men of Europe sit there numb with fear;
mukdjizat anggur dalam gendi selalu mengimbau	What twilight flush is left those faces now
	Is paint and powder, or lent by flask and cup.
. . . JANG MAHA KUASA, JANG ADIL, KAU!	Omnipotent, righteous, You

Indonesian	English
Betapa pahit zaman ini	but bitter the hours,
Pahit tertahan djam dan waktu buruh,	Bitter the laborer's hours
kini terikat dalam duniaMu	Chained in Your world!
Bilakah runtuh dan karam KAPAL KERADJAAN EMAS INI?	When shall this golden galley's dominion flounder?
DUNIAMU, HARI PEMBALASANMU, TUHAN,	Your world Your day of wrath, Lord,
BERDIRI DAN MENUNGGU!	stands and waits!

Two things about this poem stand out immediately. First, Iqbal's imaginary meeting of Lenin and God portrays the famous Bolshevik as, though not a Muslim, inevitably in awe of God's presence. Lenin effervescently sings God's praises, acknowledging his sovereignty over all creation. Perhaps Iqbal felt that Lenin's avowed atheism, like Nietzsche's, was ultimately irrelevant; in death, all humankind would have to acknowledge God. In the poem, Lenin does not go to hell or purgatory as one might expect an atheist to, but instead meets God and pleads with him as the biblical Job might.[270] In much the same way, Lenin seems to berate God while acknowledging his omnipotence.

Iqbal may have felt that Lenin, like Nietzsche, had important contributions to make to humanity. Lenin's lack of faith did not ultimately detract from the value of his contributions. In this context, Lenin's contribution was to be the voice of righteousness, to rightly identify the suffering of the masses, and to demand redress for them. This framework seems to have been attractive to Bahrum Rangkuti and Arif Husain, who chose to capitalize several lines in which Lenin acknowledges God's omnipotence (the capitalization does not exist in the original Urdu), even selectively adding punctuation like exclamation marks for extra emphasis. They must have felt a certain satisfaction or sense of apotheosis in Lenin's fictional submission to God ("today, I witness and acknowledge realms / I once thought the mummery of the church"). The point, however, being that Lenin was not anathema to Islam; misguided though he was, Iqbal and his Indonesian translators were willing to countenance the validity of Lenin's ideas.

[270] After suffering many bereavements, Job berates God for the many injustices that God has allowed in the world, though Job never renounces his faith (Job 7:17–24:12).

Second, this poem was a vehicle for critiquing the many injustices perpetrated by imperialism and capitalism, articulated within an Islamic ethical framework. This was not unusual for Iqbal's work. It is difficult to deny that other poems in *Gabriel's Wing*, such as "God's Command to the Angels," harbor similar sentiments. It includes lines such as these: "Rise, and from their slumber wake the poor ones of My world! / Shake the walls and windows of the mansions of the great! / Kindle with the fire of faith the slow blood of the slaves!"[271] Appreciative though he was of his European education, Iqbal held some unambiguously critical views of the world European dominion had created. In "Lenin BEFORE God," he wrote of Asians' worship of European society, the widespread belief in the superiority of European ways, and the internalization of European standards of beauty. He also pointed out how hollow European beliefs in the civilizing effects of philosophy and science were, for Europe worshiped nothing more than the wealth of Asia, while European philosophy preached the equality of men even as European empires used their mastery of science to exploit colonial subjects. The references to machines standing sovereign and the bank towering over the house of God are unmistakable references to capitalism and the industrial revolution, and Iqbal clearly revels in the prospect that fate will one day dislodge Europe from its primacy. It was entirely unsurprising that a poem like this would resonate with audiences in newly independent Indonesia, which won its freedom through blood and the endurance of privation. After all, this poem was translated in 1953, when the exultant memory of the revolution was still fresh.

Much like Hamka's *Revolusi Agama* (1946), examined in chapter 3, "Lenin before God" was informed by an understanding of Islam that emphasized Islam's role in promoting socioeconomic justice. The whole point of ejecting the Dutch or the British was not merely to supplant them with local elites, or to return to a princely past of lavish royal courts. The prize of victory was the opportunity to refashion society in accordance with Islamic values of justice and dignity for all, not to ensconce a theocracy of jurists or cleanse the nation of all non-Muslims. How that refashioning ought to take place was up for debate, and certainly Iqbal's contributions in that regard were more theoretical than practical.[272]

[271] Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), 175–76.

[272] Sevea, *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal*, 164–65.

Nevertheless, Bahrum Rangkuti and Arif Husain must have felt the particular resonance of "Lenin before God" in an Indonesia that seemed to have emerged triumphant from the quake that ended European imperialism. The day of God's wrath had arrived, and the edifice of empire had fallen. Indonesia now stood satisfyingly on the cusp of a new world, had Indonesians but the clarity of vision and the strength of will to midwife it. To do so, Indonesia would have to learn and adapt discerningly from the best the world had to offer, while remaining true to itself, much as Iqbal had.[273] This was what made a poem like "Lenin before God" so attractive for Indonesian audiences; it was not impossible, or even difficult, to imagine learning from the Bolshevik revolution, or the American, French, or Chinese revolutions, while remaining a true Muslim.

The same applied to many Muslim members of the PKI. The leftist writer Hersri Setiawan, who was not himself a PKI member but who was incarcerated for years alongside other leftists after the 1965 massacres, recalled how Islamic piety and identity helped inmates to survive years of privation and beatings. Prisoners would often take turns reciting or reading the Qur'an aloud—it being one of the few books they were allowed—as a form of solace and entertainment.[274] Hersri himself would quote Iqbal's poetry as a source of comfort in the face of difficult circumstances, musing that Iqbal's celebration of human ingenuity was also evident among prisoners, who manufactured all kinds of tools and necessities from the limited materials at hand.[275]

Although Iqbal was relatively popular throughout Indonesia, Persian poetry, even in translation, was inevitably the province of the well-educated Muslim intelligentsia. Some organizations deliberately sought to engage in forms of cultural production that would capture the attention of the masses, and the confluence of Islam and Marxism was evident in those productions as well. A prime example of this was LEKRA (Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat, Institute of People's Culture), an artists' organization affiliated with the PKI. It perceived the importance of making artistic production in the new

[273] Rangkuti's intention in this regard was evident from his introduction to the anthology, in which he writes "In truth, [*The Secrets of the Self*] is not only about morality or wisdom, but also about all the permutations of human perspectives on questions of economy, politics, art, and culture" (*Jang benar dan salah itu bukanlah hanja dalam urusan susila atau kebijakan, tetapi dalam seluruh pendjelmaan dan pikiran manusia tentang ekonomi, politik, kesenian dan kebudajaan*). See Bahrum Rangkuti, "Kata Pengantar," in Iqbal, *Asrar-i Kuhdi: Rahasia-Rahasia Pribadi*, 42.

[274] Hersri Setiawan and Keith Foulcher, "Arts and Entertainment in the New Order's Jails," *Indonesia* 59 (1995): 8.

[275] Ibid., 10.

republic comprehensible to the masses, acknowledging the need for art to reflect their lived realities and tastes. This did not mean that all LEKRA-sanctioned productions were subject to an artistic orthodoxy like the prevailing socialist realism of the USSR and PRC; there was remarkable diversity of vision within LEKRA itself.[276]

LEKRA's magazine was titled *Zaman Baru* (New Age), and it began publication in 1956. It made no secret of its ties to the PKI: *Zaman Baru* regularly carried advertisements for the PKI newspaper *Harian Rakjat*. Articles from 1957 onward were notably PKI-sympathetic. Originally an elegant monthly magazine with a minimalist aesthetic, by 1957 it had developed into a newspaper arts supplement published once every ten days. *Zaman Baru* was very much plugged into broader issues of leftist concern across the world, publishing articles on how Sartre's views on Communism had evolved, Bertolt Brecht retrospectives, and the arrest of Pablo Neruda.[277] It was very much an extension of the impulse to make Indonesians heirs to world culture, regularly republishing strips from the early twentieth-century satirical antiwar Czechoslovak comic *The Good Soldier Švejk* (1921–23). It was also sufficiently well regarded that accomplished writers like Pramoedya Anata Toer, though not formally a LEKRA member for much of the 1950s, chose to publish in it.

For a magazine with obvious Marxist connections, *Zaman Baru* was surprisingly prone to engaging with specifically Islamic issues, as well as publishing artistic works that deployed Islamic frames of reference. An article titled "Gerakan Modernisme di Mesir" (The Modernist Movement in Egypt) was a straightforward explanation of Muhammad Abduh's (1849–1905) ideas, with the author clearly expressing his approval for what he saw as a rational approach to *fiqh*.[278] For example, the article explained the logic behind Abduh's rulings (*fatwa*) on polygamy, arguing that Abduh's opposition to—though not disavowal of—polygamy was based on a rigorous reading of the Qur'an and hadith.[279] The very same issue also carried an article celebrating the life and works of the Marxist social realist novelist Maxim Gorky, explaining his relevance to Indonesia.[280] *Zaman Baru* did not limit itself merely to the realm of art: it also published articles exhorting Indonesians

[276] Bodden, "Modern Drama, Politics, and the Postcolonial Aesthetics of Left-Nationalism in North Sumatra"; Matthew Woolgar, "A 'Cultural Cold War'? Lekra, the Left, and the Arts in West Java, Indonesia, 1951–65," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 48, no. 140 (2020): 103–7.

[277] Anonymous, "Memudji Komunisme," *Zaman Baru*, August 20, 1957.

[278] Dr. Osman Amin, "Gerakan Modernisme di Mesir," *Zaman Baru*, July 10, 1957.

[279] Ibid.

[280] Dyanti B. Supeno, "Maxim Gorki di Indonesiakan," *Zaman Baru*, July 10, 1957.

to identify with global working-class solidarity, calling on them to oppose injustice everywhere.[281] Such articles sat cheek by jowl alongside short stories like Sugiarti Siswadi's "Sorga Dibumi" (Paradise on Earth). Siswadi's short story was deeply immersed in an Islamic frame of reference: her pious Muslim characters and even her narrator repeatedly invoked God's love for mankind, with no hint of mockery or caricature.[282] The paradise on earth her characters looked forward to was clearly some form of proletarian classless society, and Sugiarti Siswadi seemed to have no problem articulating that vision in Islamic terms.[283]

For these Marx-influenced artists and writers, the quest to articulate a genuine, honest Indonesian literary voice necessitated engagement with both the world beyond Indonesia, as well as all things authentically Indonesian. Whether or not they were practicing Muslims, they recognized that Islam was one of the core components of Indonesian identity and could never be blithely dismissed if Indonesian art was to be authentic and resonant. The point is not that LEKRA members were self-conscious Muslim Communists (although certainly some were), but rather that magazines like *Zaman Baru* provide a glimpse into the literary climate of the 1950s, in which the coexistence of religion and Marxist cultural polemics was not considered jarring. In the sphere of artistic production, Islam and Marxism could sometimes meet.

Conclusion

Els Bogaerts provides a tidy summary of the ethos of cultural production during the parliamentary democracy period, which is relevant to the broader political climate of the period as well. Bogaerts posits that the creative attempts to articulate a uniquely Indonesian national culture, which had begun in the 1910s, flowered in the conducive conditions of the 1950s. The work of Indonesian artists like the poet Sitor Situmorang (1923–2014, one of the definitive Angkatan 45 poets alongside Chairil Anwar) was representative of a broader societal attempt to synthesize a meaningful "Indonesianness." Sitor Situmorang published articles in *Mimbar Indonesia* identifying Indonesians' intellectual and cultural referents as "London, Paris, New

[281] Anonymous, "Solidariteit Segala," *Zaman Baru*, August 20, 1957; Bakri Siregar, "Bangsa jang Berkemauan Baik," *Zaman Baru*, August 20, 1957.
[282] Sugiarti Siswadi, "Sorga Dibumi," *Zaman Baru*, June 1956.
[283] Ibid.

Delhi. And maybe Peking. The actual meaning of Western culture, Russian Communism and new democracy in China is what matters to us. Between Washington and Moscow, the Netherlands is just too small a factor for us to worry about."[284] Situating themselves as heirs to or translators of world culture, Indonesian artists and intellectuals laid claim to all the benefits and lessons the world had to offer, whether those had germinated in Amsterdam, Moscow, Tokyo, Washington, or someplace else. This applied to political systems, economic policies, and religious beliefs as much as it did to the arts.

This was substantially similar to the sentiments expressed by Asrul Sani about Indonesians being "heirs to world culture." These sentiments were shared by others and dominated the consciousness of the Indonesian intelligentsia during the parliamentary democracy period. Both within and without the halls of power, an efflorescence of Indonesian intellectual life took place, in which Muslim identities and Marxist critiques of capitalism were accepted as legitimate components in deliberations about how Indonesian society ought to be organized. Drawing inspiration from the Indonesian past, other Muslim societies, Southeast Asian neighbors, as well as Europe, the USSR and PRC, Indonesians sampled on a global scale to shape their visions for Indonesia. It was within such a framework that Islam and Marxism could interact productively.

There was a high degree of continuity between the revolutionary and parliamentary democracy periods, as Indonesians continued to sample freely and adapt creatively. Centrifugal forces, such as the differing political visions that had become open fissures with the Darul Islam rebellion and Madiun affair of 1948, had plagued the republic since early in the revolution. The achievement of independence quelled them momentarily, but over the course of the 1950s the centrifugal forces grew stronger and mounted increasingly robust challenges to the young state. The conditions facilitating creative adaptation were sustained by parliamentary democracy, but increasing polarization between parties vying for power, as well as between the central government in Jakarta and outlying regions, meant the window would not remain open for long. The intellectual environment of parliamentary democracy was a direct continuation of the revolutionary efflorescence, but the

[284] Els Bogaerts, "Whither Indonesian Culture? Rethinking 'Culture' in Indonesia in a Time of Decolonization," in *Heirs to World Culture: Being Indonesian, 1950–65*, ed. Jennifer Lindsay and Maya H. T. Liem (Leiden: KITLV, 2012), 247. *Mimbar Indonesia* was a weekly magazine published from 1947 to 1966, strongly associated with the urban intelligentsia who had significant access to European education.

republic was under pressure by the same centrifugal forces it faced during the revolution. The greatest centripetal force of all, a common enemy in the form of the Dutch, had faded into obsolescence. The dynamism of Indonesian political thinking, heir to the colonial-era pergerakan project of translating the world to Indonesia, was in final bloom during the 1950s. The republic was increasingly unsteady, and Soekarno would eventually be tempted to constrict the discursive space that allowed varied conciliations of Islam and Marxism to flourish. In its place, he would construct his own—partly idealistic and partly self-serving—amalgam of Islam, Marxism, and nationalism.

The creative admixture of Islam and Marxism that pervaded the parliamentary democracy period was something more than the product of conducive conditions. The international climate of Afro-Asian solidarity, feminist solidarity, and Third Force nonalignment, as well as the inability of any one party to dominate parliament, helped facilitate cooperation between Muslims and Marxists. There were other international factors as well: in the Middle East, progressive Egyptian jurists like Mahmud Shaltut gained influence at Cairo's al-Azhar University, the preeminent center of Islamic scholarship, throughout the 1950s. This culminated in Shaltut, an ally of Gamal Abdel Nasser's, serving as the Sheikh al-Azhar from 1958 to 1963, and ties between al-Azhar and Indonesia deepened during his tenure.[285] In Europe, religious socialists took up the concerns of the global South in an era of decolonization, lending their support to dependency theory and nuclear disarmament.[286] However, the progressive leanings of al-Azhar's prestigious jurists and their radical approaches to *fiqh* during this period do not suffice to explain the remarkable confluence of Islam and Marxism in Indonesia. These conciliations were possible because Indonesia possessed a long history of blending Islamic identity with Marxist ideas in different permutations.

Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "habitus" may be useful in framing the cumulative impact of this long history. Bourdieu defines habitus as ingrained habits, skills, and dispositions that shape how individuals perceive their social world, and also conditions how they react to it.[287] Habitus is the reality within which individuals are socialized, including both individual and group experiences; it shapes the body language and minds of individuals. One

[285] Mona Abaza, *Three Generations of Azharites in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 1993), 14.
[286] Robert Michael Bosco, "Religious Socialism in Post-secular Europe," *Politics, Religion, and Ideology* 20, no. 1 (2019): 121–34.
[287] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

component of the Indonesian habitus, or the Indies habitus before it, was the uncontentious coexistence of Islam and Marxism. So many Indonesian politicians were inspired by Marxist ideas, and so many of them were avowed Muslims, that Masjumi intellectuals like Sjafruddin Prawiranegara labored to explain to his readers that Islam and Marxism were incompatible. The possibility for conciliation was there for all to see over the course of decades, in the speeches and writings of Soekarno and Hatta, or Semaun and Tan Malaka.[288] Naturally, many Muslims rejected such conciliation, but it was undeniably commonplace and expressed repeatedly in Indonesian print culture.

[288] Cribb, "The Indonesian Marxist Tradition," 258–59.

5

Epilogue: NASAKOM and Its Proponents

Hoping to cut the Gordian knot of political dysfunction endemic to the parliamentary democracy period, Soekarno attempted to weld the various parties and intellectual currents of the Indonesian republic into a composite polity, a kind of political amalgam. This was supposed to placate most but ended up satisfying few. The only recourse he could perceive to legitimate political divergence was imposed unity, deploying charismatic appeals to resurrect revolutionary solidarity while using force to suppress dissenters in the PSI and Masjumi.[1] Soekarno called this system Guided Democracy (1959–65), and of course his was the guiding hand.[2]

In his 1964 Independence Day address, Soekarno was unequivocal about the Marxist inspirations behind his goal of building a socialist society. He provided a teleological account of human progress that was clearly indebted to Marx and Engel's dialectical materialism, tracing Indonesia's progress from an age of "modern imperialism and monopolistic capital" to an age of continuous revolution, to a "revolution of rising demands."[3] This was a process of constant improvement and refinement that echoed Bukharin, Trotsky, and Mao.[4] Soekarno's goal was clear: "The Indonesian revolution's aim is socialism! The Indonesian Revolution moves toward a new world without *exploitation de l'homme par l'homme* and *exploitation de nation par nation*!"[5] Marxism was integral to the achievement of socialism, insofar as it was an useful system of knowledge: "If there is any *ilmu gaib* that I possess, it is because I understand the Mandate of the Suffering Masses [*Amanat Penderitaan Rakjat*], because I understand the situation, and because

[1] Both parties were resolutely against reverting to the 1945 constitution and were forcibly dissolved in 1960.

[2] For the structural features of Guided Democracy, see Lev, *The Transition to Guided Democracy*, 193–252.

[3] Soekarno, *Tahun "Vivere Pericoloso"* (Djakarta: Departemen Penerangan R.I., 1964), 14–15. Rendered in English.

[4] For Mao's ideas on continuous revolution in relation to Trotsky and Bukharin, see Lowell Dittmer, *China's Continuous Revolution: The Post-liberation Epoch, 1949–1981* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), viii, 1–10.

[5] Soekarno, *Tahun "Vivere Pericoloso"*, 14.

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I understand the potent science of Marxism [*ilmu yang kompetent jaitu Marxisme*]."

At the same time, Soekarno peppered this speech with Islamic shibboleths to signal his religiosity and the continuing relevance of Islam to "socialist Indonesia." He repeatedly used *Alhamdulilah* (praise be to God) and *insja Allah* (God willing), as well as the less formulaic *aku mengutjap sjukur kepada Tuhan* (I give thanks to God).[6] At one point, he even waxed lyrical about how "the waves pounding the shore sound like a hymn to omnipotent God if we know how to listen."[7] Soekarno also emphasized the necessity of *akal* in the new socialist society Indonesia was building, noting that *akal* had been essential to pergerakan activism and the revolutionaries' success in ejecting the Dutch.[8] This was not new: in a 1960 speech marking the Qur'anic revelation to Muhammad during Ramadan (*Nuzulul Qur'an*), Soekarno had emphasized the centrality of *amal* (works or deeds) in Islam. He asserted that Islam compelled Muslims to put principles into practice, not merely follow rules and proscriptions, and it was upon this basis that Indonesian socialism was compatible with Islam.[9]

While affirming the importance of Islam and its frames of reference, Soekarno conceived of Islam as one source of inspiration among many, rejecting the dualism of the Cold War in favor of creative adaptation: "We cannot afford to suffer from the sickness of Islamophobia, nationalism phobia, or Communism phobia," which he collectively described as *revolutionnaire krachten*, revolutionary forces.[10] Equally, he did not expect Communism or Islam to provide complete answers to Indonesia's specific needs. NASAKOM was a foundation upon which further creative adaptation could be enacted, in accordance—at least rhetorically and theoretically—with the ethos of the revolution and parliamentary democracy.

This 1964 speech was an expression of the porous worldview that had dominated Indonesian political thinking for decades. Where Soekarno's synthesis differed from preceding periods was his semisuccessful attempt to turn creative idealism into a state ideology that justified his role as the republic's guiding hand. Soekarno had always been a canny politician, and he read the mood of the 1960s well. The intellectual dynamism of the 1940s

[6] Ibid., 13, 27, 53.
[7] Ibid., 10.
[8] Ibid., 19.
[9] Soekarno, *Bung Karno Dan Islam: Kumpulan Pidato Tentang Islam 1953–1966* (CV Haji Masagung, 1990), 51–55.
[10] Soekarno, *Tahun Vivere Pericoloso*, 18.

and 1950s remained genuinely popular, and he inserted himself into that discourse rather than pushing against it—as strongmen often do, and as Soeharto later would—to justify the reversion to presidential government that was concretized in 1959. He was at pains to rhetorize his dynamic and creative credentials, invoking multiple referents and solidarities. He quoted the British historian Thomas Carlyle on the necessity of being "wise ahead of our time" (*wijs van tevoren*), that is, the necessity of having vision instead of constantly responding to exigency.[11] He also argued that the Indonesian Revolution was powered by its romantic ideals, lionizing the "romanticism" of the Philippine novelist José Rizal and the French communard Georges Danton, both of whom "went romantically to their executions."[12] He lauded the "romanticism" that motivated the Red Army at the battle of Stalingrad (1942–43), and which mobilized millions of ordinary Chinese to subdue the Yangtze River through flood control infrastructure.[13] Vision and romantic ideals were what Soekarno hoped NASAKOM would midwife, because the republic was a project in need of constant refinement, and learning from the rest of the world was central to that endeavor. More concisely, and in a nod to even Indonesia's imperial antagonists, Soekarno stated that Indonesia had rightly assimilated "the knowledge of both Rotterdam and Harvard" (*ilmu-ilmu à la Rotterdam dan à la Harvard*).[14] Soekarno's ideological inspirations were as plural as his linguistic references, because creative adaptation genuinely resonated with most Indonesians.

Soekarno was unquestionably vainglorious and prone to authoritarianism by the late 1950s, but his charisma and reputation, as well as his successful appropriation of creative adaptation, meant that he still had prominent supporters who endorsed NASAKOM. Roeslan Abdoelgani (see Figure 5.1) was a trusted lieutenant who had served as the secretary-general of the Bandung conference (1955), foreign minister (1956–57), and minister for information (1963–64). Over the course of the 1960s, he gave several speeches at Islamic institutions and events that wholeheartedly embraced NASAKOM's relevance and utility for both Muslims and Marxists. Roeslan gave a speech titled "Islam Adalah Agama Kemadjuan" (Islam, a Progressive Religion) at Muhammadiyah's youth congress, held in Yogyakarta July 16–19, 1964. Looking ahead to the fruits NASAKOM might bear, Roeslan hailed

[11] Ibid., 8.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid., 9. The Yangtze River flooded regularly, with catastrophic loss of life in 1931, 1935, and 1954.
[14] Ibid., 13.

Muhammadiyah's youths as "the generation of the ummah that will build Indonesian socialism based on Pancasila."[15] This would be a socialism that "embodies [*bersendikan*] scientific and religious principles," because "scientific and religious socialism [i.e., Indonesian socialism] requires the development of Islamic teachings, precisely because Islamic teachings maintain a perfect balance between material and spiritual life."[16] Describing Islam as a "liberating force," Roeslan argued that "Islam, as a progressive religion, is full of progressive and revolutionary teachings," citing unspecified Qur'anic verses in support.[17] His conception of Islamic socialism was in service to Soekarno's new creed, but it drew upon a lineage of Islamic socialism that stretched back to Tjokroaminoto's *Islam dan Sosialisme* (1924).[18]

This sense of lineage, of refining and synthesizing the intellectual achievements of other societies to suit Indonesia's purposes, was also a major theme in Roeslan's *Sosialisme Indonesia* (1960). Besides celebrating Tjokroaminoto for having identified Islam's antipathy to interest in general and capitalism in particular, as well as claiming that "socialism and democracy are God's will," Roeslan asserted that

> based on the teachings of Ernest Renan, Karl Kautsky, and Otto Bauer on nationalism, and mirroring the methods of struggle employed by Indian leaders Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Mohamad Ali [Jauhar], Sjaukat Ali, Gopala Krishna Gokhale, C. R. Das, Professor Sadhu Vaswani, and also learning from the principles and experiences of China's Sun Yat-sen, Indonesian nationalism must be unified with Islam and Marxism.[19]

This synthesis was made possible because Roeslan, Soekarno, and other proponents of NASAKOM genuinely believed in Islam's progressive aspect. On August 26, 1964, Roeslan gave a speech at a Djamijatul Muslimin

[15] Roeslan Abdoelgani, *Kobarkan Terus Api Islam* (Djakarta: Departemen Penerangan R.I., 1964), 9.
[16] Ibid., 10.
[17] Ibid., 10–11.
[18] Roeslan had explicitly declared himself a successor to Tjokroaminoto's Islamic socialism in the 1957 Constitutional Assembly debates. See *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Dalam Konstituante*, vol. 3 (Djakarta: Kementerian Penerangan, 1958), 348–82.
[19] Roeslan Abdoelgani, *Sosialisme Indonesia: Perkembangan Tjita-Tjitanja Dan Ketegasannja* (Djakarta: Jajasan Prapantja, 1960), 26–27. Gokhale, Das, and Vaswani were Indian nationalists and prominent supporters of Gandhi; Shaukat Ali and Mohamad Ali Jauhar led the pan-Islamic Khilafat movement in the 1910s; Bauer and Kautsky were the most prominent anti-Bolshevik Marxists of the early twentieth century. These referents were entirely consistent with Soekarno's in his *Nationalism, Islam, and Marxism* (1926).

Indonesia event.[20] His Marxist inspirations were more evident here: he spoke at some length on "revolutionary dialectics" and argued that Indonesia had reached the necessary historical stage for the construction of socialist society to begin.[21] At the same time, Roeslan affirmed his faith as a Muslim and argued that the Qur'an and hadith only provided "guidelines" (*pedoman dan pegangan*) for establishing Sharia, or normative law. Ultimately, these guidelines needed to be interpreted and applied using human reason, so he called upon Djamijatul Muslimin members to "uphold Islamic teachings imbued with a revolutionary and progressive spirit."[22] This exegetical and jurisprudential framework was essentially derived from the modernist Islam of Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida, and while it did not necessarily lead to progressive outcomes, it was certainly capable of doing so.[23] Unsurprisingly, Roeslan quoted Tjokroaminoto's *Islam dan Sosialisme* at length, citing it as an example of interpreting Islam in a "progressive and revolutionary manner."[24]

Roeslan also made a point of connecting his understanding of Indonesian socialism to a broader discourse of Islamic socialism that had sunk roots in other parts of the global ummah. Much like Soekarno, he began by asserting that Islam had been a "liberating force" since its inception, its "progressivism opposing the conservatism [*kekolotan*] of Catholic dogma in the West and the archaic caste system of Hinduism in the East."[25] He was also keen to emphasize his worldliness and erudition as well as Islam's civilizational significance: he quoted the Scottish Orientalist W. Montgomery Watt and Friedrich Engels on the cultural and intellectual achievements of Islamicate societies, which he cited as evidence of Islam's "progressive foundations."[26] Roeslan argued that the confluence of Islam and Marxism integral to NASAKOM had many precedents, citing various Egyptian, Indian, and Pakistani intellectuals on the subject of Islamic Socialism. He quoted at length from Indian philosopher and academic Khalifah Abdul Hakim's *Islamic Ideology* (1961):

[20] Djamiatul Muslimin Indonesia was a PNI-sponsored organization, likely an attempt to rally Muslim support behind Soekarno. Its membership remained small, and it lacked the influence of more established organizations like Muhammadiyah or NU.
[21] Abdoelgani, *Kobarkan Terus Api Islam*, 17–18.
[22] Ibid., 20.
[23] See Abdoelgani, *Sosialisme Indonesia*, 28. Here Roeslan explicitly endorsed the modernist Islam of Muhammad Abduh.
[24] Abdoelgani, *Kobarkan Terus Api Islam*, 25.
[25] Ibid., 22.
[26] Ibid., 22–23.

> Long before Marx it was the Qur'an that had inculcated economic justice by teaching that organizing your economic life in such a way that wealth does not circulate among a minority of the rich. Allowing free initiative within legitimate bounds, it closed all avenues of exploitation. Surplus wealth had to be returned to the have-nots of society. The Muslim state was founded by the Prophet as a welfare state. The Muslims can learn much from Communistic economic planning.[27]

He also cited the Pakistani Ahmadi scholar Mirza Muhammad Hussain's *Islam and Socialism* (1947): "Islam extirpates capitalism and landlordism and calls into being a society based on equality and liberty."[28] Roeslan must have known that Mirza Muhammad Hussain was no Islamic socialist, but the point he wanted to convey was how Islam was fundamentally progressive, potentially revolutionary, and inimical to capitalism. Connecting Hakim and Hussain to Tjokroaminoto, Roeslan pointed out that Indonesia did not lack its own proponents of Islamic socialism.[29] Roeslan went so far as to argue that the Rashidun caliphs had "built a socialist society in accordance with Islamic teachings; indeed, during the time of Caliph Umar, the composition of government and society was Communistic-militaristic within the boundaries laid down by Islam."[30] More bluntly, Roeslan cited the Indian poet Muhammad Iqbal as the source of this pithy aphorism: "Islam is identical with Bolshevism plus God."[31] NASAKOM's proponents had come full circle, resurrecting the rhetoric of 1920s Islamic Communism. Deployed in service to Soekarno's ambitions, this rhetoric was not quite the idealism of Nathar Zainuddin and Haji Datuk Batuah; at the same time, it was only potent because it had deep roots in Indonesian political thinking.

On the PKI's part, NASAKOM provided an ideological structure within which the party could take shelter. Unfortunately, like Soekarno himself, the PKI was largely unsuccessful in turning ideals into reality or delivering on policy goals. Having hitched its cart to the horse of the state, its capacity for educating and organizing was significant, but its strategic position was precarious. The top military leadership was implacably opposed to the PKI, and the party failed in its attempts to organize an armed wing. It never received

[27] Ibid., 23–24. Rendered in the original English.
[28] Ibid, 24. Rendered in the original English.
[29] Ibid., 25.
[30] Ibid., 25–26.
[31] Ibid., 26. Rendered in English; no source is provided.

a ministerial portfolio and became increasingly reliant on Soekarno to influence legislation and policy. Popular mobilizations could win short-term gains but these could not be sustained, as evinced by the PKI's retreat from its attempt to implement the Basic Agrarian Law of 1960 by unilaterally redistributing land in 1964–65.[32] In effect, the PKI had a (glacially slow) plan to wield power through influencing the state, but it was unable to make concrete policy gains such as enforcing labor rights, nationalizing industries and plantations, or redistributing agricultural land equitably. Anti-imperialist mobilizations were emotionally satisfying and numerous throughout the 1960s, notably the 1963 (temporary) seizures of Shell and Unilever facilities as well as British rubber, tea, and tobacco plantations.[33] However, these gains were not consolidated and did not meaningfully improve most citizens' quality of life. These failures did not constitute an effective advertisement for Marxism's virtues, and such constraints must have made NASAKOM seem relatively safe and attractive to the PKI.

The PKI was fully invested in NASAKOM, as editorials published in in the main PKI newspaper *Harian Rakjat* show. The editors endorsed NASAKOM specifically because they believed it united progressive, anticapitalist forces under the same umbrella and would facilitate the implementation of the land redistribution promised in the Basic Agrarian Law.[34] They understood NASAKOM as laying the foundation of an efficacious political coalition, one superior to interparty coalition governments, because most parties contained numerous politicians whose interests were aligned with landowners and Euro-American business interests. For the PKI, NASAKOM provided a means of mobilizing anticapitalist politicians across disparate parties to pass laws and develop policies that would benefit the *rakjat djelata* (downtrodden masses).[35]

Aidit personally made repeated attempts to convince Indonesians that Communism and religion were functionally compatible within the NASAKOM framework. At a guest lecture delivered to a mixed audience at Salatiga's Satya Watjana Christian University in November 1962, he drew on Engels's *Anti-Dühring* (1877) to argue that Communism possessed a class-conscious "ethical and moral system" that was independent of religious ethics,

[32] Antonie C. A. Dake, *In the Spirit of the Red Banteng: Indonesian Communists between Moscow and Peking, 1959–1965* (Berlin: de Gruyter Mouton, 1973), 241–49; Justus van der Kroef, "Indonesian Communism's 'Revolutionary Gymnastics,'" *Asian Survey* 5, no. 5 (1965): 219–20.

[33] Van der Kroef, "Indonesian Communism's 'Revolutionary Gymnastics,'" 217–18.

[34] Redaksi, "Pertjabangan Fikiran 'Merdeka,'" *Harian Rakjat*, June 19, 1964.

[35] Ibid.

but their similar implications made them compatible.[36] While admitting many points of divergence between religious and Communist ethics, Aidit pragmatically asserted that it was precisely Marxist historical materialism that made the PKI accept the "objective reality that the vast majority of Indonesians adhered to monotheistic faiths," so their interests would have to be addressed by the PKI as well.[37] To Aidit, NASAKOM was a productive framework precisely because it emphasized points of convergence instead of dwelling on division; locating NASAKOM's genesis in Soekarno's 1926 article "Nationalism, Islam and Communism," Aidit argued that the vitality of the 1920s pergerakan was a direct result of efforts to sublimate differences between Islamic and Communist activists.[38] Given the opportunity, NASAKOM could do so again.

NASAKOM reverberated outside the realm of politics as well. LEKRA, the PKI-affiliated artistic organization covered in chapter 4, produced multiple plays that engaged respectfully with Islam and meditated on Islamic ethics during this period. These included Joebaar Ayoeb's *Siti Djamilah* (1962), Utuy Tatang Sontani's *Si Kabayan* (1959), and Bachtiar Siagan's *Batu Merah Lembah Merapi* (1959, The Red Rock of Merapi Valley). This last play was the most popular LEKRA play of the late 1950s, having been performed up to sixty times in North Sumatra alone.[39] The ethos of NASAKOM extended to film too, notably in Asrul Sani's *Tauhid* (1964). Set in Mecca and centered on the hajj, it was the first film Saudi Arabia allowed to be shot in Mecca. *Tauhid* was commissioned by Soekarno to reflect "the revolutionary ethos of the time," a sentiment indubitably tied up with Guided Democracy and NASAKOM.[40] It was also supposed to "make a positive contribution to furthering the Indonesian revolution."[41] Funded by the Indonesian state, it projected a dynamic and progressive vision of Islam, one that could exist comfortably within the ideological framework Soekarno had constructed. The film's protagonist is a doctor who signs up to serve on a ship ferrying Indonesian pilgrims to Mecca for purely economic reasons; along the way, he rediscovers his faith and the spiritual significance of pilgrimage. The

[36] D. N. Aidit, *Pengantar Etika Dan Moral Komunis* (Djakarta: Akademi Ilmu Sosial Aliarcham, 1962), 21.
[37] Ibid., 9.
[38] Ibid., 7.
[39] Bodden, "Modern Drama, Politics, and the Postcolonial Aesthetics of Left-Nationalism in North Sumatra," 57.
[40] Harus Salim H. S., "Indonesian Muslims and Cultural Networks," in *Heirs to World Culture: Being Indonesian, 1950–65*, ed. Jennifer Lindsay and Maya H. T. Liem (Leiden: KITLV, 2012), 99.
[41] Ibid.

PKI denounced *Tauhid* as religious propaganda, but Soekarno's patronage ensured that it was screened at the first Afro-Asian Islam conference in Jakarta (1965).[42] The PKI's enemies made much of Soekarno's partiality to Communism, but Soekarno was no less of a patron to Islamic artists.

NASAKOM also influenced plays of this period. Sontani's *Si Kabayan* (1959) provides a point of entry to the cultural milieu of the Guided Democracy period, demonstrating how the unitarian impulses undergirding NASAKOM were diffused throughout society. Utuy Tatang Sontani (1920–1979) was one of LEKRA's most prominent playwrights, and some of his plays were embedded in a distinctly Islamic moral universe, despite LEKRA's commitment to socialist realism. Sontani was born in Cianjur, West Java, and received a vernacular education in the Taman Siswa network of schools in Bandung. As a LEKRA member, Sontani moved in leftist circles—visiting China in 1957 and attending the first Afro-Asian writers' conference in Tashkent in 1958—but never considered himself a Communist.[43]

Si Kabayan evinced a kind of fascination with Islam and its social effects. In the play, the inveterate layabout and brazen trickster Kabayan cooks up a remarkably simple yet effective scheme to pass himself off as an Islamic holy man (*wali*) who is possessed by the prophet/angel al-Khadr (*Hidir* in Indonesian). First produced in 1959 by LEKRA, it was among LEKRA's most popular plays, and incorporated humorous elements from older creolized art forms like *ludruk* and *ketoprak* into modern theater.[44] It was especially well received in ethnically heterogeneous North Sumatra, where LEKRA-sponsored theater groups (known as LESDRA, Lembaga Seni Drama, or Institutes of Dramatic Art) toured the region and performed multiple shows at LEKRA-organized *pekan drama* (drama weeks).[45] An entire theater festival was dedicated to Utuy Tatang Sontani's work (*Pekan Utuy*) in 1960.

In *Si Kabayan*, the eponymous Kabayan is a relatively recent migrant to a Javanese village in the vicinity of Garut, West Java. Having married a local woman, he moves in with her but is too lazy to perform agricultural labor, preferring to sleep rather than work in the fields with his father-in-law.

[42] Ibid., 100; Salim Said, *Shadows on the Silver Screen: A Social History of Indonesian Cinema* (Jakarta: Lontar, 1991), 73.

[43] Harry Aveling, *Man and Society in the Works of the Indonesian Playwright Utuy Tatang Sontani* (Honolulu: Southeast Asian Studies Program, University of Hawai'i, 1979), 4.

[44] Bodden, "Modern Drama, Politics, and the Postcolonial Aesthetics of Left-Nationalism," 68.

[45] Ibid., 58.

Kabayan's obtuse laziness verges on the slapstick and infuriates his wife's family. To escape from their anger and his wife's incessant nagging, he spontaneously devises a scheme to pretend that he has been possessed by a spirit, whom he implies is the prophet/angel Hidir. His ruse is so convincing that he quickly acquires a reputation as a miracle worker, and people travel from across West and Central Java to visit him. People believe that he is a "intermediary, someone who has been purified, who is close to God," and who can therefore help them "receive the munificence of God."[46]

They ask Kabayan to intercede on numerous matters, some more inappropriate than others. One civil servant asks for a promotion at work; a woman requests that her husband be compelled to divorce his new (second) wife; a soldier asks to be made impervious to bullets before he is deployed to the front; another civil servant asks that his upcoming corruption trial will not end in incarceration. Kabayan provides each of them with water from the local well, telling them that it is holy water that will cleanse them of their sins, and assuring them that he will do his best to intercede on their behalf. In return, they provide him with voluntary donations, some of which are quite valuable. Even Kabayan's father-in-law comes to repent his anger and asks him for forgiveness. Having amassed enough money to sustain his wife's family for months, Kabayan tells his wife that the time has come for him to leave his village and go into seclusion. However, he leaves a letter for his wife that she only reads (with her father present) when Kabayan has departed. The letter is brief, and admits his deception:

> Ijem—I must leave you forever. No need for you to know where I've gone, just as there's no need for you to know where I came from. During the time I stayed in your village, I've learnt so much about human stupidity. And I've had my fill of playing with it. I'm in truth just an ordinary man. My soul is no purer than others. I never met the Prophet Hidir, let alone the Almighty God that you all worship. . . . However, I believe you won't tell this to others, for you've sworn in the name of Almighty God haven't you? You have sworn that you won't tell who and what Kabayan really is.[47]

Kabayan's father-in-law is understandably incensed, but Ijem's response is telling. Instead of being angry, she says:

[46] Utuy Tatang Sontani, *Si Kabayan*, in *Three Southeast Asian Plays*, trans. Abidah Amin (Kuala Lumpur: Tenggara, 1970), 13.
[47] Ibid., 23.

IJEM: "Don't swear at him, Pa. Whatever he is, he has done us a great service."
FATHER-IN-LAW: "What service?"
IJEM: "He brought us a lot of wealth, without hard work and without begging. His going wrenches my whole soul."
FATHER-IN-LAW: "Sure, because you're his wife!"
IJEM: "No Pa, because he really is pure-hearted, because he is truly holy."[48]

Remarkably, Ijem's reaction to Kabayan's deception is to declare that he is still holy in her eyes. Kabayan is not celebrated for having duped his self-serving supplicants. Instead, the proof is in the pudding: rather than absconding with the money he has earned, he admitted his deception but left his wife's family with a modest amount of capital. He is not a believer himself, but he does not make light of Ijem's faith either, and insists on holding her to her oaths. The play is comic in its depiction of Kabayan's trickery and his father-in-law's venality, but it strikes a reflective and moralizing note. Religion has its place, even for nonbelievers like Kabayan, and his actions reinforce religious values in their own surprising way.

In *Si Kabayan*, Islam is not a trick played on the credulous masses to bridle them through subservience; the play makes a subtler assertion that religion is to be judged by its social effects, a position that aligned neatly with PKI rhetoric on religion. Somewhat surprisingly, given his obvious aversion to honest labor, Kabayan does not abuse his status as a holy man to fleece his petitioners. He accepts donations reluctantly, allowing his petitioners to decide what they would like to give him. He even performs social and moral functions, reprimanding his petitioners for their sinful behavior (particularly the corrupt official hoping to avoid incarceration) and reminding them that they ought not to be asking self-serving favors from God. At the end of the play, his wife Ijem repeatedly reminds her infuriated father that Kabayan did not abscond with the valuables he received. While Sontani certainly wanted to satirize the credulousness, venality, and herd instincts of his fellow citizens, he also suggests that Islam is not the opiate of the masses—*nafsu* is humanity's true enemy. At the same time, he leaves open the tantalizing possibility that God can do good work through impious men like Kabayan. Plays like this were products of both the febrile parliamentary democracy period and synthetic climate of Guided Democracy. Soekarno's rhetoric and ideals sketched the outline, but it was plays like *Si Kabayan* that filled in the details

[48] Ibid., 24.

for ordinary Indonesians, exploring the principles undergirding NASAKOM in ways that people could easily understand.

In the aftermath of the attempted coup of September 30, 1965, even the PKI's most vocal Muslim enemies continued to espouse their commitment to Indonesian socialism. In an October 15, 1965, article published in the daily newspaper *Mertjusuar*, Muhammadiyah's Soerasto Sastrosoewignjo publicly denounced the PKI as traitors while the mass killings of suspected Communists were underway. Even Soerasto, however, reaffirmed Muhammadiyah's commitment to "Indonesian socialism" and NASAKOM, accusing the PKI of being "hypocritical NASAKOM-ists" and identifying his readers as "progressive-revolutionary people."[49] It was not that NASAKOM was hollow or that it had been delegitimized by the PKI's support; the unitarian impulse NASAKOM embodied remained a powerful one in Indonesian political thought. Rather, it was the PKI's association with the attempted coup that had (understandably) alienated everyone else, because it represented a betrayal of NASAKOM. The strength of that unitarian impulse, or alternatively the feasibility of Muslims working alongside Marxists to build Indonesian socialism, remained even in extremis. This was only possible because of the decades of confluence between Islam and Marxism that had preceded Soekarno's Guided Democracy. Put another way, if Soekarno had conjured up NASAKOM as an entirely novel concept in 1959, it would have fallen flat on its face.

As the preceding chapters have demonstrated, many PKI members saw no contradiction in being both Muslim and Communist. Many continued to reiterate that belief into old age, even though it was obviously transgressive and potentially dangerous to do so. One of the few "Muslim Communists" from the Guided Democracy period to have been interviewed on film was Imam Ahmad, a former caricaturist for the PKI newspaper *Harian Rakjat*. In his words, "Marxism is actually a philosophy. It does not question religion or God. The notion that Marxism is antireligious or anti-God was a creation of Suharto's New Order regime . . . religion is a private question for each of us."[50] Imam's words are presented as a voice-over in the video, while he is

[49] Soerasto Sastrosoewignjo, "You Have Stabbed Us in the Back Again," in *Indonesian Political Thinking, 1945–1965*, ed. Herbert Feith and Lance Castles (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), 373–75.

[50] "Imam Ahmad," Kaum Murba Indonesia, accessed October 6, 2021, http://arie-widodo.blogspot.com/2015/10/imam-ahmad.html. Filmed by Mahatma Putra and Dennis Hasangapon, Anatman Pictures.

depicted completing one of his five daily prayers at home. This differed from Soekarno's or Roeslan Abdoelgani's synthesizing approach to Islam, which was to say progressive and dynamic interpretations of Islam made it congruent with socialism. Nevertheless, the larger point remains NASAKOM's genuine resonance. Different people found different ways of putting Islam and Communism in productive dialogue during Guided Democracy, but they were only able to do so because NASAKOM was in part an organic result of Indonesian creative adaptation in preceding decades. Soekarno's appropriation and codification, even fossilization, of the long confluence between Islam and Marxism in the form of NASAKOM sullied it, but it remained compelling because it was not a hollow sentiment.

Conclusion

During the time I spent in the Netherlands conducting archival research, I had the opportunity to meet with an old exile, once a journalist for the PKI newspaper *Harian Rakyat*. He survived the killings of 1965–66 because he had been out of the country but lost many members of his family. He never returned to Indonesia, and eventually became a citizen of the Netherlands in his old age. An incredibly generous and humorous man despite his frailty, he welcomed me into his home, and we spent an afternoon together chatting about matters both historical and mundane. Upon hearing about the nature of my research, he immediately described himself as "Islam *abangan*" without being prompted.[1] I noticed multiple volumes of Marxist theory in English, Dutch, and German, languages he was fluent in, perched on his overflowing bookshelves. On a separate shelf in a different corner of his house, he also owned several copies of the Qur'an, in both Indonesian and Arabic. He was clearly not an Islamic Communist in the mold of Hasan Raid or Ahmad Dasuki Siradj, and he did not describe himself as such. His bookshelves and his self-professed identity, however, did illustrate how Muslim identity and political commitment to Communism could coexist comfortably. In his case, that confluence had not merely been the product of particularly conducive circumstances; it had lasted a lifetime.

The novelist and former political prisoner Putu Oka Sukanta wrote movingly of the ways in which political prisoners accused of being Communists framed their identities as Muslims. The following abstract from Sukanta's *Merajut Harkat* compounds these complex feelings as well as their social contexts. In it, the Communist political prisoner Risno is speaking to the novel's narrator:

[1] *Abangan* refers to Indonesian Muslims whose religious traditions actively embrace the local and regional influences on Islamic praxis, such as Hindic influence on Islam in Java. See Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

Ummah Yet Proletariat. Lin Hongxuan, Oxford University Press. © Oxford University Press 2023.
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He [Risno's brother-in-law] was the only one in her family who disapproved of our marriage. For political reasons. He used to be a big shot in the Socialist Party, the PSI. My father-in-law belonged to Muhammadiyah, but when it came to his daughter's happiness he was prepared to let go of politics. I haven't forgotten what he said to her: "You can marry anyone you like, as long as he believes in God. I don't want you marrying an infidel." My wife, my fiancée at the time, told me what he said and asked me about my beliefs. I convinced her that I did believe in the existence of Almighty God, but I confessed that I rarely performed the ritual prayers. My parents were *abangan* Javanese, nominal Muslims who believed in the world of the spirits. The important thing for them was that we didn't go against God's commandments. My wife was always reminding me about the daily prayers, and it's true, when I was busy I forgot more often than I remembered. But I always fasted the full month of Ramadan. Now I'm not fasting, my feet still hurt, and I can't calm my nerves. I'm paying for it now." He fell silent.

His story set me thinking about how many of us, myself included, had been unprepared for this separation from our families. We lived peaceful lives, and none of us ever expected to end up in jail like this. A hurricane had come from nowhere and blown our lives to smithereens. I sat and watched Risno cry—a party activist, a Communist cadre, awash with tears because he was missing his family. Was this sentimentality, or an expression of his deepest humanity? On the other side I'd seen our interrogators, those apes, with their professed piety and belief in God, engage in sadistic torture and commit rape, justifying whatever means they used to get what they wanted. There was no more law. They didn't fast, and I'd never seen any of them perform the daily prayers. Did people like that still need to ask God's forgiveness? Did they acknowledge the greatness of God? Hadn't they put themselves above God's power? I had heard that in Central and East Java, they'd competed to see how many people they could kill, in the belief that forty beheadings was enough to get someone into heaven. Although they didn't wait for heaven to claim their reward—they looted everything they could find among their victims' possessions.[2]

As I argued in the introduction, fiction can expose a range of emotions and feelings that conventional historical sources can only glimpse. Through his prose, Sukanta was expressing something very true of the social milieu of

[2] Putu Oka Sukanta, *Merajut Harkat*, 320–22.

Indonesian Marxists, although this was not the straightforward recollection of a memoir: for many Indonesian Marxists, their Islamic faith and Marxist political commitments could and did coexist, in contrast to prevalent assumptions that Islam and Marxism are diametrically opposed. Their intellectual and affective reference points were plural: they saw fit to identify both with the global community of Muslims as well as a global movement of proletarian solidarity. The remnants and traces of this confluence remain visible in the fiction penned by former political prisoners.

John T. Sidel has shown how the Indonesian Revolution was deeply inspired by cosmopolitan connections to the rest of the world.[3] Similarly, this book illustrates how agile and imaginative Indonesians were in adapting a range of ideas from other societies. Both Moscow and Mecca—among many others—were reference points for Indonesian Muslims. Indonesia was not alone in this protracted process of cosmopolitan sampling: similar efforts were underway in Vietnam and the Philippines.[4] Any history of Indonesian political thought must take into account the intellectual and affective orientations of Indonesians not just to Cairo and Mecca or Moscow and Beijing, but also to Europe, India, Turkey, Vietnam, and Japan. Eager to translate the world to Indonesia, Indonesians sampled broadly, and this made for a dynamism in Indonesian political thinking that allowed conciliations of Islam and Marxism to thrive.

This book has also been an attempt to correct the assumed polarities of Indonesian political identities, categories like the Communist, nationalist, and Islamic *aliran* (lit. streams), or the *santri*/*abangan* dichotomy, which have dominated both popular and scholarly discourse for decades. Ariel Heryanto eloquently described how Suharto's New Order regime (1966–98) relied on a toxic form of identity politics and stigmatization to justify its existence, a strategy that has configured Indonesia's citizen-state relationship in fundamental ways.[5] The fossilization of political identities under the New Order embedded categories like "nationalist" or "Islamic" as signifiers of communal identity in the popular imagination, although these categories efface more than they reveal. These categories remain relevant insofar as people have come to identify themselves with reference to them. Before 1965, however, political identities were nebulous and overlapping: many Muslims saw

[3] Sidel, *Republicanism, Communism, Islam*, 72–202.
[4] Ibid., 19–71, 203–87.
[5] Ariel Heryanto, *State Terrorism and Political Identity in Indonesia: Fatally Belonging* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 159–60.

no need to explain their membership in the PKI or other Marxist parties. Achmadi Moestahal and Hasan Raid's memoirs are examples of the pressure Marxists felt, after decades of New Order fossilization of political identities, to explain their Muslim-ness and vice versa. Before 1965, they simply were.

Suharto's New Order has ably shown how mass movements, and even entire discursive fields, can disappear—smothered by the state and its preferred narratives within one generation. In Indonesia, this was achieved through various mechanisms: the dissemination of print culture demonizing Communism, television and radio broadcasting that fetishized the violence committed by the would-be coup plotters on September 30, 1965, as well as curricula and textbooks that glorified Suharto and the military as the republic's saviors. Muslim organizations like NU were aggressively co-opted to espouse this New Order narrative, further cementing the idea that Islam and Marxism were irreconcilable.[6] Collectively, these efforts reshaped the dominant historical narrative in the minds of the young, and even the minds of those who had experienced older discursive fields. Older discourses like the humane expression of Islamic ethics in socialist policies, exemplified by Hatta or Masjumi's Jusuf Wibisono, had once been the dominant political direction of the 1950s. These vibrant and creative discourses were optimistic and aspirational, but they were important because they shaped the possibilities of what Indonesia might yet become. Being both a Muslim and a Marxist is now a deeply transgressive proposition: what was once so obvious as to require no explanation has now become nearly unthinkable. I have sought to unravel the fabric of the New Order narratives that obscure the past, so that the incomprehensible may be self-evident again.

Confluences of Islam and Marxism were so persistent over such a long period that they beg several questions. Why did this discursive formation not remain stable? Why did mixing Islam and Marxism cease to be part of a tenable political platform? How could a discursive field that was so robust for decades crumble so irrevocably after 1965? These are not the core questions that animate this book, but answering them seems a fitting epilogue. The 1965–66 massacres of Communists after the attempted coup of September 30, 1965, demonized all manifestations of Marxism, but this was merely the catalyst for the destruction of a discursive field, not an underlying reason for

[6] Katherine E. McGregor, "A Bridge and a Barrier: Islam, Reconciliation, and the 1965 Killings in Indonesia," in *Reconciling Indonesia: Grassroots Agency for Peace*, ed. Brigit Bräuchler (New York: Routledge, 2009), 215–16.

its demise. In the domestic realm, there were at least two major reasons why Marxists in general and the PKI in particular became such an effective scapegoat, generating enough ire to fuel the New Order's propaganda for decades.

First, the trope of "the enemy within" had become well established in the Indonesian political imagination, a legacy of secessionist attempts like Republic of South Maluku (1950–63), the Darul Islam rebellion (1948–60), and the PRRI/Permesta attempts to bend the central government to their will (1957–61). The threat of a fifth column waiting to rupture the fragile republic was not implausible, and Cold War propaganda about the nefarious intentions of the PKI fit well into the republic's recent historical experiences. Second, Soekarno increasingly relied on the PKI to balance the military's political influence in the late 1950s, as well as using the PKI as a crutch in his attempt to recapture executive power. The PKI's association with Soekarno's increasingly authoritarian ways stained the PKI, undermining its claim to be seeking a peaceful, democratic route to power. Moreover, Soekarno's obvious role as the main beneficiary of his new "political concept" (Manipol-USDEK) made the blend of Islam and Marxism that he espoused seem hollow, especially among the educated political elite. When the PKI was accused of plotting a coup and organizing the assassination of several generals in September 1965, it did not seem implausible to many Indonesians—even though nearly all the PKI's top leadership, excepting Aidit, were ignorant of any conspiracy.[7]

At the international level, the conducive climate generated by the Third Force of Nasser, Nehru, and Soekarno, as well as the many Marxist-friendly international conferences held in Rangoon (1953), Bandung (1955), Delhi (1955), and Bombay (1956) built on anticolonial solidarity, began to fade in the 1960s. Asian nationalists had failed to translate their early successes into tangible improvements in prosperity, stability, and good governance. The structural weaknesses of the colonial societies they inherited and the globalization of the Cold War undermined their best efforts to turn rhetoric into reality. Later attempts by postcolonial leaders such as Jamaica's Michael Manley to construct an equitable international economic order distinct from the Communist world's autarky and the United States' conditional aid looked increasingly untenable as the 1970s wore on. These attempts culminated in the Group of 77 initiative, launched at the UN General Assembly in 1974, to create what was called a New International Economic Order, the

[7] John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto's Coup D'état in Indonesia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 92–93.

international corollary to domestic socialist projects.[8] By 1980 these projects had clearly failed, but even in the 1960s the cracks were already evident. The inability to quickly achieve prosperity and stability pushed the former colonies back into a dependent relationship with former imperial economies, in need of their foreign direct investment, foreign exchange, and technical expertise.[9] This was a handicap that Indonesia constantly struggled with throughout the parliamentary democracy period: the ethos of government was anticolonial and socialist, but the reality of government, given the scarred and stunted economy it had inherited, often necessitated making compromises with Euro-American business interests. The inability to deliver much-anticipated prosperity through union action, labor protections, nationalization of industries, and land redistribution—because of macroeconomic structural constraints—made Marxism look ineffectual despite the manifest validity of its critique of capitalism. This prevented Marxist sympathies from growing beyond the peasantry, plantation workers, and urban laborers whose immediate needs were served by Marxist movements. Indonesian Marxist movements themselves provided trenchant critiques of the status quo, but their concrete plans for creating an equitable society were modest: the PKI was particularly guilty in this regard, backtracking on its commitment to land redistribution in the 1960s.[10]

As the postindependence years wore on, the inability of Marxist mobilizations and policymaking to deliver prosperity and stability disillusioned the masses who had sacrificed so much for independence. This inhibited further conciliations between Islam and Marxism, since one of its key objectives, the promotion of social justice, proved difficult to achieve. This already significant obstacle was enlarged by the domestic suppression of Islamic politics and the international climate of the Cold War. Masjumi's implication in PRRI/Permesta attempts to resist the central government hamstrung the party, and its proscription in 1960 silenced the Islamic socialism of Masjumi's left wing.[11] US attempts to co-opt Muslim organizations as anti-Communist partners during the 1950s and 1960s helped entrench the polarity of Islam and Marxism and facilitated conservative

[8] Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 18.

[9] Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: New Press, 2007), 20–21.

[10] Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism under Sukarno*, 282–90.

[11] Soeharto refused to reverse the dissolution of Masyumi in 1968 and suppressed Muslim opposition in the 1970s and 1980s.

Muslim impulses.[12] Soeharto's regime initially suppressed Islamic political movements and parties, viewing them as threats to its stability. When Islamic leaders re-emerged as a political force under Soeharto's watchful eye in early 1990s, it became far less electorally profitable for Muslim politicians to continue promoting social justice as the centerpiece of their policy platforms, given the New Order regime's overt commitment to capitalism and US patronage.[13] Individual Muslims with Marxist convictions like Ahmad Dasuki Siradj and Hasan Raid continued to exist, but the broader political climate had shifted to favor other kinds of Islamic politics.

Even where Islamic socialists in the Middle East and South Asia had come into a measure of power, such as Pakistan's Liaquat Ali Khan (1947–51) and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (1971–77), or the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood led by Mustafa al-Siba'i (1945–61), tangible results were scarce. Liaquat Ali Khan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto both operated within constraints imposed by the Cold War, and their much-vaunted Islamic socialism never truly found expression in concrete policies, allowing secular Communist and socialist factions to challenge their legitimacy as much as Islamic parties did. Although initially promising, Islamic socialist movements like al-Siba'i's Syrian Muslim Brotherhood (aka the Islamic Socialist Front) never quite achieved their full potential, as first Nasser and then the Ba'ath Party actively suppressed them after 1963.[14] The discursive space in which a distinct ideology of Islamic socialism could be proudly proclaimed and articulated in concrete policies was severely constricted by the Cold War. By the 1980s, with US-backed monarchical or military regimes firmly ensconced in power—often with the support of ultraconservative ulama—across many Islamicate societies, the international climate favored Islamic politicians who could mobilize support through the politics of identity and grievance, not the politics of social justice. This failure to actualize Islamic socialism in other Islamicate societies affected Indonesia, making Soekarno's *sosialisme à la Indonesia* seem increasingly hollow; it was US allies like ultraconservative Saudi Arabia who were thriving, not the Islamic socialists.

There were many reasons why conciliations of Islam and Marxism became increasingly untenable after 1965, but this does not mean such discourses

[12] Baskara T. Wardaya, *Indonesia Melawan Amerika Konflik PD 1953–1963* (Yogyakarta: Galangpress, 2008), 109.

[13] Robert Hefner, "Islam, State, and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class," *Indonesia* 56 (October 1993): 1–6.

[14] Dara Conduit, *The Muslim Brotherhood in Syria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 85–86.

were aberrations. Put concisely, conciliations of Islam and Marxism were compelling discourses that fundamentally informed Indonesian politics from 1915 to 1965. These discourses took on different permutations at different periods in Indonesian history in response to domestic and international developments. Explicit conciliations of Islam and Communism thrived, though were by no means dominant, during the 1910s and 1920s because the growth of Islamic mass organizations like Sarekat Islam and self-consciously modern Islamic educational institutions like the Sumatra Thawalib coincided with the success of the October Revolution and the exportation of Marxist ideas via a vigorous Comintern and an expanding Dutch socialist movement. It was a simpler time, when "messages from Europe," in Siegel's words, were being "translated" to the Indies with relatively little interference.[15] The USSR and the Comintern loomed large in the Indonesian imagination during this period, but so did a resurgent Kemalist Turkey and Sun Yat-sen's Republic of China.

The 1930s were more circumspect, with pergerakan activities suppressed by colonial antisedition laws. With the possibility of mass rallies, union organizing, and strikes constrained, various forms of associational life as well as print culture became increasingly important, and anticolonial activism took on a more pedagogical character. It was a formative, even reflective, period, one in which a younger generation of activists outside the PKI learned to engage with Marxism on their own terms, adapting Marxist and socialist ideas without jettisoning their Indonesian subjectivities and Muslim identities. Their referents were more European than Soviet during this heyday of Stalin's "socialism in one country," more deeply engaged with the ideas of Marx himself, as well as European and even American socialists. At the same time, the proponents of compatibility between Islam and Communism never entirely disappeared; they survived as fugitives abroad and in penal exile on Boven Digoel. Those voices would become influential again during the revolution.

The zeal and optimism unleashed by the revolution (1945–49) ushered in an intellectual efflorescence that created a discursive climate conducive to bold and eclectic combinations in Indonesian political thinking. In a world turned upside down by war and crumbling empires, Indonesian republicans were well positioned, even incentivized, to draw upon the pergerakan intellectual legacy of the 1920s and 1930s to sketch the contours of a new equitable

[15] Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution*, 6.

society that would sublimate the structural inequalities, quotidian injustices, and outright brutality of the colonial state and the Japanese interregnum. That legacy included conciliations of Islam and Marxism, and republicans felt free to imagine themselves as simultaneously part of the global community of Muslims as well as part of the ecumene of proletarian solidarity.

When revolutionary solidarity subsided in the 1950s, competing visions for Indonesia's future came into sharper relief; the umbrella framework of cooperation across the political spectrum continued to be championed by Soekarno and found some resonance among politicians and voters, but it was manifestly more ideal than reality. Even so, the revolutionary experience as well as the international climate of decolonization and Third World cooperation had consolidated Indonesians' sense of themselves as "heirs to world culture," and they sampled broadly to formulate composite solutions to Indonesian problems. The pull of Marxist ideas remained strong, but equally strong was the impulse to develop political expressions of Islamic faith appropriate to the era. Simply claiming that Islam and Communism were compatible was no longer compelling, as it had been in the 1920s. Both the PKI and Masjumi, and every major party in between, recognized the validity of Marxist critiques of capitalism and the centrality of Islamic values and ethics to Indonesia in this postcolonial world; they found their own ways of squaring the circle, developing political philosophies that incorporated both to various degrees. The endemic dysfunction and parliamentary deadlock of the 1950s engendered enormous dissatisfaction, however.

By the late 1950s, Soekarno had succeeded in maneuvering himself back into power, maintaining a precarious balancing act (between the PKI and the military) in the form of guided democracy and its guiding philosophy of NASAKOM, which kept him in pole position. Now it was not intellectual vibrancy that facilitated conciliations of Islam and Marxism, but state dogma. NASAKOM had eloquent proponents, who hoped to cut the Gordian knot of dysfunctional party politics with Soekarno's charisma and unitarian ideals, but their efforts could not make up for the reality of poor governance, persistent inequality, and a struggling economy—Indonesia's GDP growth went from plus 5.7% in 1961 to minus 2.3% in 1963, and remained at an anemic plus 1.8% in 1965.[16] The compatibility of Islam and Marxism had become state propaganda, no longer the outcome of an organic attempt to sample

[16] "GDP Growth (Annual %)—Indonesia," accessed September 17, 2021, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=ID.

from the best the world had to offer or to develop innovative solutions for Indonesia's future. When Soekarno was ousted in the aftermath of the September 30, 1965, coup attempt and countercoup, his rhetoric had already lost much of its luster. He was succeeded by Soeharto's New Order regime, which demonized Marxism from its inception, incorporating the mythos of saving Indonesia from Communism into its raison d'être.

This does not necessarily mean that conciliations of Islam and Marxism are a closed chapter in Indonesian history. Apart from the importance of developing a more accurate understanding of the (relatively recent) past because of how it shapes the political imagination of the present, conciliations of Islam and Marxism are worthy of our attention today because they are not quite gone. The decades of confluence between Islam and Marxism in Indonesia cast a long shadow, and the legacy of those conciliations is emerging again after years of submersion under New Order hegemony.

The book markets and libraries of Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Solo, and Padang yield many surprising discoveries: a significant number of books have been published in Indonesian by Indonesian authors on the possibilities of confluence between Islam and Marxism. Examples include Eko Prasetyo's *Kiri Islam* (Leftist Islam), Munir Che Adam's *Muhammad SAW & Karl Marx*, and Eko Supriyadi's *Sosialisme Islam* (Islamic Socialism), the last of which explicates the ideas of the Shia Iranian Islamic Marxist Ali Shariati. Moreover, English-language scholarship has also been translated—likely illicitly—into Indonesian and republished by Indonesian presses. Translations of older monographs such as Jeanne Mintz's *Mohammad, Marx and Marhaen* can easily be found in Indonesian book markets. There has been particular a resurgence in the popularity of Tan Malaka's writings since the fall of Suharto. Republications of Tan Malaka's works, particularly *Madilog*, are readily available, published by specialist leftist presses such as Sega Arsy and NARASI but also by popular publishers like Tempo. This has been echoed in digital media as well, with websites such as *Islam Bergerak*—explicitly named after Haji Misbach's 1920s newspaper—publishing articles that promote Islam's emphasis on social justice. Doreen Lee makes a cogent point that the violence of 1965–66 reverberated in Indonesian society for decades, shaping the 1998 protests that felled Suharto's regime.[17] It is not only violence that is formative, but progressive activism as well: the discursive confluences I have described

[17] Doreen Lee, *Activist Archives: Youth Culture and the Political Past in Indonesia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), x.

find echoes in today's Islamic environmentalism, or in the massive general strike organized by thirty-two labor unions in October 2020, involving approximately two million Indonesian workers.[18]

The confluence of Islam and Marxism examined in this book found expression in many ways. The primary goal of this book has been to address the fundamental questions of why this phenomenon existed, the conditions that facilitated it, and the various forms it took in relation to the relevant social, economic, and political contexts. I can only hope that I have made a fair attempt to do so, because the humane visions that Indonesian Muslims cherished for a more prosperous, equitable, and inclusive future remain compelling today. Unafraid to learn from the best that the world had to offer, unafraid to critique injustice when they saw it, all the while remaining true to their identities as Muslims and Indonesians, they modeled a modality of Islamic piety that is sorely needed today.

[18] Aninda Dewayanti and Norshahril Saat, "Islamic Organizations and Environmentalism in Indonesia," *ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute Perspective* 2020, no. 17 (October 2020).

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Medan Ra'jat
Oetoesan Ra'jat
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Pemandangan Islam
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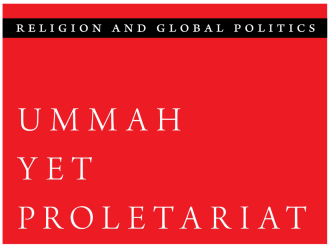
BOOK LAUNCH

UMMAH YET PROLETARIAT
ISLAM, MARXISM, AND THE MAKING OF THE INDONESIAN REPUBLIC



Ummah Yet Proletariat explores the relationship between Islam and Marxism in the Netherlands East Indies and Indonesia from the publication of the first Communist periodical in 1915 to the beginning of the anti-communist massacres of 1965–66. It explores various permutations of how Muslim identity and Marxist analytical frameworks coexisted in the minds of Indonesian nationalists, as well as how individuals' Islamic faith and ethics shaped their willingness to employ Marxist ideas. Such confluences have long been obscured by state-driven narratives which demonize Marxism and posit the mutual exclusivity of Islam and Marxism. By examining Indonesian-language print culture, including newspapers, books, pamphlets, memoirs, letters, novels, plays, and poetry, Lin show how deeply embedded confluences of Islam and Marxism were in the Indonesian nationalist project, even at its highest levels. Ultimately, Lin argues that these confluences were the product of Indonesian participation in broader networks of intellectual exchange across Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, and that such confluences were the result of Indonesians "translating" the world to Indonesia, a project of creative adaptation ambitious in both its scope and depth

Lin Hongxuan is an assistant professor at the NUS Department of Southeast Asian studies. He received his PhD in History from the University of Washington in 2020, and was a postdoctoral fellow at the Asia Research Institute in 2021 and the LSE Saw Swee Hock Southeast Asia Centre in 2022. His research has expanded to include the circulation of progressive Islamic ideas across the Indian ocean.

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RELIGION AND GLOBAL POLITICS

From 1965 to 1966, at least 500,000 Indonesians were killed in military-directed violence that targeted suspected Communists. Muslim politicians justified the killings, arguing that Marxism posed an existential threat to all religions. Since then, the demonization of Marxism, as well as the presumed irreconcilability of Islam and Marxism, has permeated Indonesian society. Today, the Indonesian military and Islamic political parties regularly invoke the spectre of Marxism as an enduring threat that would destroy the republic if left unchecked.

In Ummah Yet Proletariat, Lin Hongxuan explores the relationship between Islam and Marxism in the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) and Indonesia from the publication of the first Communist periodical in 1915 to the beginning of the 1965-66 massacres. Lin demonstrates how, in contrast to state-driven narratives, Muslim identity and Marxist analytical frameworks coexisted in Indonesian minds, as well as how individuals' Islamic faith shaped their openness to Marxist ideas. Examining Indonesian-language print culture, including newspapers, books, pamphlets, memoirs, letters, novels, plays, and poetry, Lin shows how deeply embedded confluences of Islam and Marxism were in the Indonesian nationalist project. He argues that these confluences were the result of Indonesian participation in networks of intellectual exchange across Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, of Indonesians "translating" the world to Indonesia in an ambitious project of creative adaptation.

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